VOLUME 81 ISSUE 2 OCTOBER 2020

BLUEPRINT

NAVIGATING RACIAL CONSCIOUSNESS: A COLLECTION OF RACIAL ENCOUNTERS AND EXPERIENCES WHILE GROWING UP

Table Of Contents

News

Interdistric Transfer Policy 1
Clubs in Distance Learning 2
Lafayette Mourns Passing of RGB 4
California Plan Suggests Partial Reopening 5
Election Simulation 6
Online Diversity Movie Night 7
DEI Committee Book Club 8

Feature

Students Travel to Take SAT 9
Partying Through the Pandemic 11
Bias Incident Reporting System 14
Latinx History Month 15
Navigating Racial Conciousness 18

Arts

Recipe of the Issue 23
Surge in Video Game Streaming 24
Among Us 25
The Social Dilema Depicts Scary Reality 26
Mulans (Lack of) Honor 27
Quote of the Issue 28
Snacks with Xie: Lizzy's Column 29

Opinion

TikTok: Dances or Disaster? 31
Electoral College 32
How to be a Good LGBTQ+ Ally 34
Robotic Disruption 35
Mission Trips and Humanitarianism 36

Sports

Activism in Sports 37
Female Athletes Perspective 38
Archer's Analysis 39
Fitness Apps Provide At-Home Workouts 40
Fantasy Football 41

On The Cover

Join Blueprint Liason Editor and writer Leda Abkenari as she explores the in-depth experiences that come with being a BIPOC in Lafayette. Turn to page 18 to read Navigating Racial Conciousness: A collection of racial encounters and experiences while growing up.

**Layout Design by
Anna Yiannikos
Cover Photo by
Anna Yiannikos
Cover Design by
Zoe Edelman**

Student Activism Leads to Change in Interdistrict Transfer Policy

Governing Board reinstates the interdistrict transfer policy after its changes in 2018

Liam McGlynn and Zach Snyder|
News Editor and Staff Writer

Blueprint Photo/Liam McGlynn

With all of the recent attention paid to social justice and racial disparities, many students discovered this past summer that the Acalanes Union High School District (AUHSD) reduced the number of interdistrict transfers in 2018. As a result, community members from across the district decided to speak out to reinstate the policy.

After receiving pushback by numerous student-led groups and parent organizations, the governing board unanimously voted to reinstate the Interdistrict Transfer Policy during the Sep. 16 board meeting.

2018 Policy Change

The policy adopted by the AUHSD governing board in 2018, that came into effect at the beginning of this school year, only allowed children of staff members, siblings of students within the district, or interdistrict transfer students who already enrolled in previous years, to attend school in the district. In the years before the policy was updated, students applied to transfer into the district for various reasons.

"I decided to transfer school districts because I didn't have the opportunities to learn at the same capacity in the Oakland School District and my family and I felt that it was a better fit for my education path," interdistrict transfer student and junior Jonah Premo said.

However, students that live outside of the district and did not attend any of AUHSD's partner school districts, which include the Lafayette School District, Moraga School District, Orinda Union School District, Walnut Creek School District, and the Canyon Elementary School District, would not have been able to transfer into the district.

The primary reason behind the board's decision in 2018 was the loss of some state funding. The process in which the district received funding from the California Department of Education changed from basic aid, which provides money per pupil that attends the district, to community-funded which is based on property taxes of the areas within the school district.

"Because we were facing significant budget deficits, [myself and the other board members] saw this issue as a fiscal issue: a way to save money and reduce our deficits," AUHSD Governing Board member Bob Hockett said.

While community members cited that the interdistrict transfer program provided a large part of the diversity within the district, Hockett did not believe that the reasons to keep the program outweighed those of reducing its scope at the time.

"The issue of racial equity was certainly brought up and discussed, [but] because approximately 50 percent of interdistrict transfers have traditionally been white, I did not view this as a significant issue at the time, although I certainly recognized that many viewed it as an equity issue," Hockett said.

In response to the board's plans to limit the number of transfer students the district admitted, many students and parents expressed their opposition demanding that the district overturn the decision.

Some noted that the diversity the program brings to the district was too important to lose, with 52.9 percent of the interdistrict transfer students being Black, Indigenous, or people of color (BIPOC).

"Having a diverse student body allows for new ideas and perspectives to flourish and helps to limit racism and prejudice," Premo said.

Along with the many students who expressed their concerns back in 2018, some teachers also disagreed with the board's decision to limit transfers.

"The district's argument is that they are not intending to create more segregation, but, when you take an action which you know will increase segregation, you are being segregationist," English teacher Erik Honda said.

2020 Reinstatement

After the board went ahead with the decision to limit the number of transfers, the community's awareness and outspokenness about the policy receded. With the upperclassmen graduating, their fight against the policy decreased, as lowerclassmen in the district were unaware of the policy. However this summer, as the Black Lives Matter movement spread across the country, students throughout the district once again became aware of the Interdistrict Transfer Policy and protested for its repeal.

Continued on 3

Clubs Forced to Navigate Distance Learning

A new virtual environment calls for clubs to operate solely online, impacting all fundraisers, meetings, and events

Sabrina Agazzi and Marisa Guerra Echeverria | Copy Editor and Staff Writer

Blueprint Cartoon/Anna Yiannikos

Entrepreneurship, camp-cooking, and political debate are just a few of the many clubs available to Acalanes students. The COVID-19 pandemic affects every aspect of life, with no exception to these clubs. Although the adjustment to distance learning proves difficult, students ensure their clubs will continue to thrive as an integral part of the high school experience.

Beginning with Club Day on Sept. 21, all 45 clubs shifted to a virtual setting, forcing them to conduct their regular meetings over Zoom, promote themselves through social media, and adjust events to comply with COVID-19 guidelines.

Following the district-wide school closures in March, challenges arose for students and teachers. Adjusting to a fully-virtual academic quarter arose concerns for many key aspects of the Acalanes experience, including extracurricular student clubs.

"We had weekly Zoom meetings [last semester] but it was difficult to maintain interest without being together in person," Math Club Co-President and sophomore Mary Laska said.

The first step to recreating clubs was Club Day. In a typical year, students organize booths, activities, and give away treats to educate and encourage others to join. But this year, COVID-19 put this to a temporary stop. Instead, to gain members, each club created an informational video hoping students would watch on virtual Club Day and choose to join.

"Student participation [in Club Day] is more difficult because people need social interaction and usually that happens in person, but I hope that by doing clubs, we can kind of give people a sense of normalcy," Acalanes Student Body (ASB) Vice President and senior Ellie Palma said. "Even though we are not in-person we are still making the best of our situation."

With cancellations of critical events, fundraisers, and in-person meetings, many clubs seek new ways to connect with their members, which have resulted in varying degrees of success.

"We've noticed there are many more ways to help the community from a distance than we anticipated," Acalanes Key Club Vice President and junior Aerik Kunju said. "It can be a challenge to find services that we think our members would actually enjoy doing...but we really don't mind the challenge of getting creative because this really just introduces us to ways of helping out that we've never done before."

Although the switch to virtual meetings demands many clubs to reassess their annual in-person activities and fundraisers, club leaders resolve to find creative ways to boost community morale and meet their fundraising goals.

"We were thinking of delivering little baggies of baked goods and friendship bracelets each month in place of our usual bake sales. Also, it's kind of ambitious, but we were thinking if we could pull together a drive-in movie night to replace our normal movie night in the Performing Arts Center (PAC)," Students for the Advancement of Global Education (SAGE) Co-President and senior Megan Baginski said.

Even though clubs have found innovative ways to hold fun activities, many crucial aspects are impossible to continue while respecting safety precautions.

"Especially since my club is about Japan, and food is a really big part about culture, I'm a bit disappointed that we can't do any food activities, or sharing recipes, or having people try out different candies that I normally would have planned to do without distance learning," Japan Club President and sophomore Jou Yoshida said.

In addition to canceled in-person meetings and school activities, organizational clubs who partake in annual trips, conferences, and competitions outside of Acalanes encounter the additional challenges of virtual clubs.

"[COVID-19 restrictions] forced pretty much all of [our competitions] to be moved online. We will hopefully participate in the online AMC (American Mathematics Competition), and other online competitions," Laska said.

Clubs promote the wellbeing of Acalanes students by providing them with fun ways to make friends, support issues, and come together as a community for a shared purpose within the school. However, the prospects of enduring yet another Zoom meeting, even if it is for extracurricular club activities, is unappealing to many.

"I wouldn't love [clubs over Zoom] but I'd be fine with it. I am getting somewhat used to Zoom. It is still weird but I think everyone is getting slowly more adjusted," sophomore Jack Hambidge said.

The loss of clubs' in-person community-building also poses a major problem for new Acalanes students, including transfer students and incoming freshmen, who only know Acalanes through a computer screen.

"It has definitely been harder to meet people this year because there isn't the opportunity to talk to people in class or between classes, although breakout groups have been nice because I've been able to talk with people I don't know," freshman Jenna Steele said.

Despite the circumstances, most club members remain positive. They look forward to returning back to in-person school, even if it is in the distant future. Many club leaders already have plans on how they will readjust their clubs to a typical environment.

"If Acalanes moves to in-person learning I think our club will do more hands-on activities which would allow us to hopefully form more meaningful and deeper connections," Lunch Bunch Club Co-President and junior Gabby Sandberg said.

Some clubs even place a special emphasis on checking in with their members' mental health and forming bonds over Zoom during these isolating times.

"I think our club is especially important during distance learning because online school makes it very challenging for students to connect with one another so this club will increase student's social interaction as well as improve their mental health," Sandberg said.

Now more than ever, teachers encourage Acalanes students to sign up for clubs, pursue individual interests and causes, and stay connected to others.

"Clubs provide such an important role given distance learning. It provides opportunities for students to connect around a common interest, to lead, to support one another, and to have something that connects them to Acalanes at a time when we are all home," leadership teacher and club coordinator Katherine Walton said.

Interdistrict Transfers

Continued from 1

With a similar argument of the positive effects of diversity, these student activists reignited the conversation and pushed for the original policy's reinstatement.

"Having a mix of different students creates new perspectives and friendships, as well as a respect for the things we aren't as familiar with," President of the AUHSD chapter of the Grass Roots Law Project Gemma Leach said. "A lot of hate comes from fear of the unknown, and with that removed, the atmosphere on campus is so much more positive."

These student activists, especially those attending Miramonte, engaged with the policy head-on. A group of current students and alumni from Miramonte learned about the Interdistrict Transfer Policy in March of 2020 and decided to write emails to the school board.

Very quickly the group grew and more students became involved with petitioning the policy while creating a network of passionate students in the district, and eventually founding the Acalanes Union Coalition for Transfer Students (AUCTS). Joshua Morganstein, a senior at Miramonte and an AUCTS member, was one of the original students who formed this group.

"In my mind, and I know, for a lot of other people, public education as an institution in America should be welcoming and open to everyone, regardless of where you live, regardless of the color of your skin, regardless of your socioeconomic status. The ban on transfers fundamentally shifted that definition of public education," Morganstein said.

Over the summer, the AUCTS organized a protest outside the district office to demand the board reconsider the interdistrict transfer policy. Many students like Morgnastein took their activism even further, including having zoom discussions with multiple board members to present a 37-page report on the importance of reinstating interdistrict transfers. The AUCTS aimed to educate the community on the benefits of having interdistrict transfer students.

"This might be a little bit stereotypical or cliché, but overall the parents were really always concerned about their kid and their student. It was assuring them that their student would have a better education with a school district with transfers. That was really the selling point that appealed to a lot of them," Morganstein said.

After this summer's public pushback of the 2018 decision, the board scheduled to readdress the Interdistrict Transfer Policy.

During the AUHSD school board meeting on Sep. 16, board members addressed the policy and took into consideration the pushback from the community. As a result, the district unanimously voted to reinstate the transfer program and increase the number of students welcomed into the AUHSD.

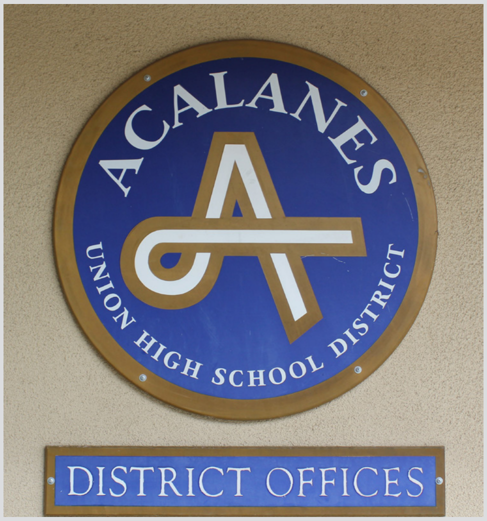
"It became obvious that a very significant portion of our student body, parents, and community members viewed this as an equity issue," Hockett said. "Because of this widespread perception, and the fact that I strongly support diversity, I felt I should change my vote."

Additionally, although the district lost funding, the district's financial situation significantly improved over the past two years.

"Our revenue has increased beyond our projections, so although we are still not receiving any state aid for interdistrict transfers, and although we are still looking at minor budget deficits, we felt we had the flexibility to once again allow such transfers," Hockett said.

Despite the success in reinstating the Interdistrict Transfer Policy, more work lies ahead as community members strive to create a more diverse and equitable environment beyond school.

"I really hope that those students, parents, and other community members who fought so hard to bring greater diversity to our schools, will now turn to the real challenge, and more difficult challenge, of bringing greater diversity to our communities," Hockett said.



Lafayette Community Mourns Death of Late Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg

Ginsburg's fight against gender discrimination forever changed the perception of gender roles in America

Erin Hambidge and Brendan Connelly | Staff Writers

Over the course of her long career dedicated to fighting against gender inequality, Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg became a cultural icon for younger generations. Her legacy lives on today, inspiring many throughout the Lamorinda community and all across the country.

Ginsburg passed away from pancreatic cancer complications on Friday, Sept. 18, while surrounded by family in her Washington home. Her death ended an 11-year battle with the disease.

With the presidential election three weeks away, her death built on the already surmounting chaos surrounding the election, robbing many people of the time to mourn the loss of an iconic and inspirational woman.

"I was really sad because she was fighting so hard for equality and justice in the U.S. and it's honestly kind of scary because almost everyone is having feelings of hysteria with our political state right now," junior Alara Rose said.

As a student, Ginsburg became a pioneer for gender equality. She was one of nine women to attend Harvard Law School, in a class of 500. She went on to finish her law degree at Columbia University, graduating first in her class. This was a remarkable achievement especially in 1959 when society expected women to stay home while their male counterparts received higher education.

Ginsburg's commitment to education serves as an inspiration for many young women striving to pursue a similar professional career.

"Her unwillingness to give up, even when there were only nine women at Harvard Law School in a class of 500, makes me want to aim for the greatest education I can. Her example is one of the reasons I am so excited to go to college and learn as much as I can. One day, I may even go to law school as she did," 2020 alum Nicole Prozan said.

Despite her landmark accomplishments in the field of gender equality, Ginsburg's work benefitted the everyday lives of American people. This made her an accessible figure to everyone, regardless of gender. She was a champion for the rights of the people and this gave many American's an opportunity to identify with her.

"She was really a champion for the American people, defining who we are as Americans. And she worked very hard on the front and back end of the phrase, we the people, on defining the term we and we, the people, and who we are," history teacher Joseph Schottland said.

There were other aspects of her identity that allowed many people to identify with her in ways that they could not with other justices and cultural icons. As the first Jewish woman to sit on the Supreme Court, she exemplified a faith and culture that was frequently underrepresented in the United States.

"RBG was Jewish. I too am Jewish. I resonated with that a lot. Because that's another identity along with feminism that means a lot to me," Prozan said.

Her impact was largely due to her refusal to quit, and give in to all of the voices telling her she had no place on the most prestigious court in the United States.

"I think she was a very important figure when it comes to women's rights and gender equality because she was constantly fighting for change, and never gave up," junior Natalie Means said.

One key element that concerns many regarding Ginsburg's death is the future of Roe V. Wade. This landmark case of 1973 increased abortion rights immensely, giving women more legal options. Ginsburg opposed the verdict because of the climate at the time.

"Some felt that the court overstepped its bounds. And in fact, Justice Ginsburg herself criticized the court, by saying that it got out in front of its skis in the sense that the public opinion was not quite there yet," Schottland said.

Courtesy Graphic/Notorius RBG

Despite the doubts of major women's groups and his own reservations, former President Bill Clinton appointed Ginsburg to the supreme court in 1993. From the day she donned her robes, and over the course of a long career dedicated to serving the American people, she became an advocate for gender equality and a role model to many.

"Our generation will definitely carry out her legacy. It may take a while but the fight for women's rights and equality for everyone is never going to end," Rose said.

In addition to her many landmark decisions, it was Ginsburg's position on the court that prevented Roe v. Wade from being overturned. There was a great deal of opposition to it and still is. If approved by the Senate, Trump appointee, Amy Coney Barrett, may be the deciding vote in overturning Roe V. Wade.

"Because Ginsburg was kind of the last barrier for Supreme Court and Republicans to take away abortion rights and a lot of other rights that women have fought for, it's definitely very scary. I was initially, obviously sad, and then that the secondary emotion was fear," Prozan said.

Now Ginsburg lies under the U.S. Capitol Building, the first woman and Jew to have that honor. Her accomplishments from a lifetime of serving this country continue to inspire every American to fight for the better society which she dedicated her life to build.

"She was an inspiration to women and to young girls, to strive for their very best because they could reach the pinnacle of power," Schottland said.

New California Plan Suggests Partial Reopening

Exploring Governor Newsom's system and its effects on Lafayette life

Noah Glosson, Connor Faust, and Michael Balmat | Head Section Editor and Staff Writers

Acalanes students often look to local businesses for their first experience with employment. However, many local businesses shut their doors in the first months of the COVID-19 pandemic, causing financial difficulties for not only the businesses but the Acalanes students that work there.

With declining numbers of COVID-19 cases in California, Governor Gavin Newsom recently implemented a plan which changes standards for business practices during the pandemic, allowing some businesses to reopen their doors.

As Gavin Newsom unveiled his new recovery plan, Contra Costa County began easing economic restrictions.

Although many Contra Costa businesses stayed closed due to COVID-19 cases rising and positivity rates remaining frequently high, Newsom revealed a system to determine the scale of reopening in each county throughout California.

As of this article's publication, Contra Costa has 4.3 new cases per 100,000 per day and a 2.4 percent test positivity rate. These numbers have successfully fallen low enough to reach the "substantial" category, defined as four to seven new cases per 100,000 per day with a 5-8 percent test positivity rate. Placing Contra Costa County in the "substantial" category according to the Contra Costa Health Services (CCHS) website, Lafayette now has the ability to reopen some non-essential businesses with the necessary precautionary measures.

Businesses that have stayed open or reopened have displayed a strong resolve to take these precautionary measures seriously.

Courtesy Photo/Tim Franco

"...we require that all team members wear a mask. Additionally, all team members are required to fill out a county health form and have their temperature taken before the start of every shift," Patxi's owner Blaine June said.

Businesses that require direct interaction with customers have often taken these measures a step further in an effort to protect both the employees and the customers.

"Everyone wears masks," UPS cashier and sophomore Nathan Friedman said. "We have a screen between us and the customers, and customers must have masks. We can only have a few people in the store at a time and we have hand sanitizer to sanitize all the pens the customers might be using."

While these precautions have become commonplace over the past few months, the regulations still have an effect on the amount of business local stores see on any given day.

"In-person customer interaction is different when you need to stay six feet away, but it is still a good experience," Learning Express Toys salesperson and sophomore Mary Laska said. "We have far fewer people coming in now because there are no more large events like birthday parties, which is good because there is less risk of the spread of COVID, but it means we are not making as much."

This decrease in income has had a large impact on businesses and their employees. Some businesses have been forced to lay off or furlough workers and cut down on hours.

"Every restaurant has seen a drop in business since the start of shelter-in-place. As a result, we've had to furlough many of our team members," June said.

As a result, some businesses have made the decision to tighten restrictions on who they hire.

"We've stopped hiring high schoolers because there is no need," Laska said, "but no people have been laid off to my knowledge."

In addition to employees being furloughed, some workers consider not going into work for their own safety.

"Some of our volunteers have opted not to work at this time because, in addition to age, they have other risk factors, either themselves or other family members," Friends Corner Bookshop owner Sharon Lingane said.

The now necessary distanced methods of commerce come with their own troubles. Some have had difficulty adjusting to the technology-based ways of doing business or have been forced to pay more.

"Pulling building permits has been a huge battle. The director has been and is out of touch with the new online approach," owner of Construction Plus Lafayette Scott Lourghan-Smith said. "We can only pay our permit fees online and not in person so the 'convenience fee' is now a mandatory fee."

While the pandemic has resulted in a major economic recession, certain businesses have been thriving during shelter-in-place.

"...I believe that we're doing ok. Probably better than ever," Friedman said, "We've been delayed a lot through the COVID with shipping stuff but with just the amount of Amazon returns we have a large amount of business."

With the changes in normal commerce, some businesses have taken advantage of the openings that have formed within their respective industries.

"Being a pizza restaurant we've had a take out/delivery model in place for years. Due to COVID, we've experienced an amazing increase in take-out sales," June said, "We've basically had to bring back some of our furloughed team members. We hope this trends up so we can open for full service."

Election Simulation Gives Students a Voice

Teens practice participating as engaged and informed voters

Julia Poole and Sabrina Agazzi | Online Feature Editor and Copy Editor

As millions of people cast their mail-in ballots or prepare to vote in-person, students will also cast their votes in the Acalanes Virtual Election Simulation. Replicating the actual election, students learn about candidates and issues on a local and nationwide level, receive a ballot, and cast their ballot on Election Day.

Registration for the third annual Acalanes Election Simulation opened on Oct. 5. To register, students can log onto the library page of the school website and complete a Google form by the end of the school day on Oct. 30. Registered students will receive a ballot through email, which they must return by 3 p.m. on Tuesday, Nov. 3rd.

This simulation teaches students approaching voting age about the actual election process and how important it is to exercise the right to vote.

"By having this project for three continuous years, Acalanes students have been through nearly an entire four-year election cycle. Seniors will know what to expect and will hopefully see registering and casting a ballot as something you automatically do," head of the Election Simulation and librarian Barbara Burkhalter said.

According to Child Trends, a research organization focused on improving youth's lives, from 1972 to 2016, the proportion of youth ages 18 to 24 who reported voting in presidential elections decreased from 50 to 39 percent. Participation at Acalanes, however, increased from 27 percent in the 2018 Midterm Election Simulation to 56 percent in the 2020 California Primary Election according to Burkhalter.

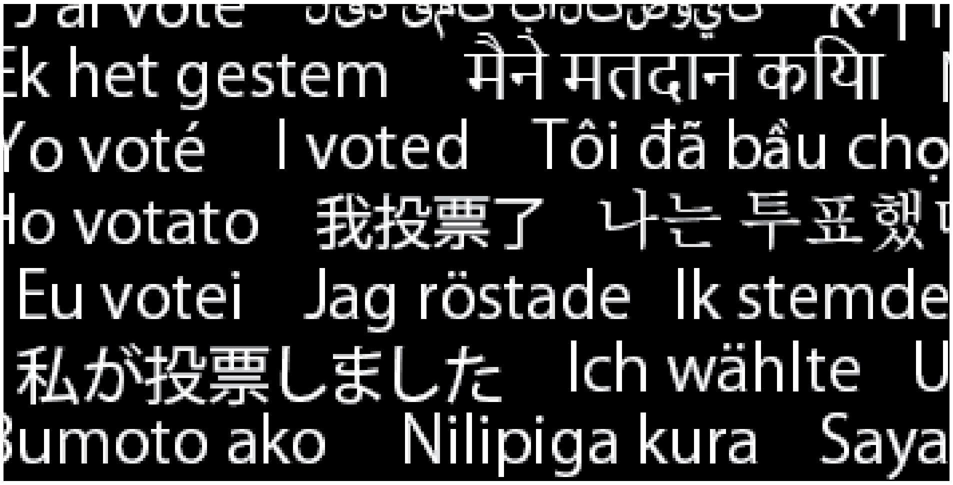
"I think this is because of better communication from us and from their teachers making the connection between the registration process and then the next step, filling out and casting their ballot," Burkhalter said.

Many people at Acalanes hope the election simulation will familiarize students with the voting process and increase the number of young voters.

"I believe it is important for students to participate in the Election Simulation because it is a good introduction to one of the rights we will have when we're 18 and it's also important to be aware and participate in current issues," junior Caroline Crossland said.

While the Presidential Election affects all Americans, not having a say in political actions can be discouraging for many teens.

"I'm frustrated that I'm not able to vote in the actual presidential election. This election will be one of the most important elections during my lifetime, and I'm only missing being able to vote by two months," senior Jessica Chu said.



Blueprint Cartoon/Liam McGlynn

Many other students share this frustration and yearn to participate in the decisions that shape their lives.

"The decisions made by the next president will affect Gen Z more than any other generation because of how different Trump and Biden's climate change policies are. It's unfair that we don't get a say in our own future," junior Katrina Ortman said.

The simulation will not only include the candidates for president, but also for state senator, state assemblyperson, House of Representatives for our local district, and the AUHSD School Board, as well as five state Propositions and a measure for Contra Costa County.

The majority of students believe participation is crucial for the actual upcoming election.

"I think that it is especially important to participate this year due to our country being at stake from social unrest, COVID 19, our weather drastically changing from climate change. Our whole country will either go in a really progressive direction or a conservative direction, depending on which candidate gets elected," Crossland said.

Not only is it especially important to vote in this election, but students also acknowledge that voting is key to our democracy for all elections.

"There's a large chunk of voters who think the only time they need to vote is for the president, but there are a lot of other elections that are really important. It doesn't just happen every few years, they happen every few months. The simulation teaches students about the other things on the ballot besides the [presidential nominees]," English teacher Erik Honda said.

With a political divide growing in the country, students hope to reconstruct our democracy through the eradication of polarized political parties.

"People shouldn't vote for a candidate just because they are Democrat or Republican, or because their parents vote for them. They should vote for the candidate whose morals align the most with their own," Ortman said.

Leadership Hosts Online Diversity Movie Night

The Diversity Board teamed up with Girl Up to hold a viewing of "Miss Representation"

Haley Rurka and Nastia Grits | Staff Writers

As the feminist movement continues, women from all around the world stand together to fight for equality for all genders. The movement sparked an interest in the Acalanes Diversity Board, who chose to screen the movie "Miss Representation" for their annual movie night.

Acalanes Leadership's Diversity Board hosted this online movie night via Zoom on Sept. 5 for students to learn about feminism and the impact of social media.

Over 30 people attended the movie night to watch the screening of "Miss Representation" and have a discussion about the impact social media has on the perception of women in society. The board believes addressing and protecting women's rights is extremely important and that students at Acalanes should educate themselves about the goals of the movement.

"[The board] talks a lot about equity and our goal this year is to make everybody feel welcomed at this school and for them to know that it's a safe place to talk about their individual needs," diversity board secretary and sophomore Hailey Stripling said.

While the diversity board hopes to bring light to many issues that different groups face, they chose a movie about feminism to explore how social media portrays women. Stripling explains that while all the groups the diversity board covers are important, they wanted to focus on women and the role social media plays in their lives.

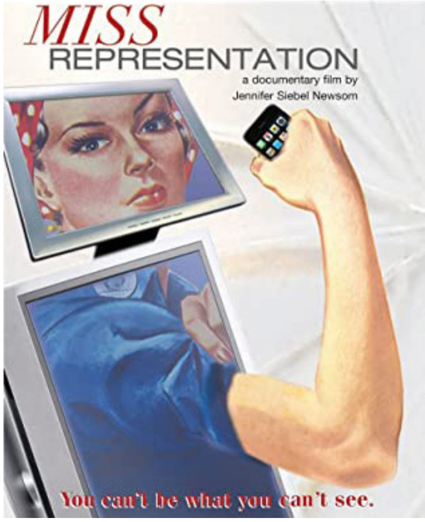
"Even though we're mainly focusing on racial equity and diversity this year, we still think that it's important to bring up other issues because those topics are still extremely relevant," Stripling said.

The group partnered with Girl Up, an Acalanes based organization, to show the movie.

"Girl Up is an organization that helps to empower young girls and raise money for girls in developing countries to get an education and we then sign bills, like during our summer retreat to Washington DC," Vice President of the Acalanes Girl Up Club, Lexi Sofield said.

Girl Up hoped the movie night would inform viewers about how the media portrays women versus what realistic representation actually looks like.

After watching the movie, the Diversity Board and the Girl Up Club held a discussion on the main message of the movie. They wanted their audience to understand how many people believe social media represents women poorly and why.



Courtesy Graphic/The Representation Project

"Social media portrays women by what they look like on the outside versus who they actually are and what they do and who they are on the inside. It's definitely damaging to our youth," Stripling said.

The movie takes a stance on the relationship women have with the media, claiming that the negative aspects of social media outweigh the positives. It got its message across well, reminding those who went of the ongoing problems and challenges women face.

"Women are portrayed as objects way too often. Even when we're not treated as objects, social media's portrayal of women's personalities are just not realistic," sophomore Amelia Morgan said.

The movie shown at the virtual screening, "Miss Representation", describes one example of how sexism exists on weather channels and how it is often seen as normal.

"Something that shocked me was the way they pointed out that if you look at newscasters, it's typically old white men in suits and then these women who are dressed in super provocative clothing. [They have] these super young women to kind of balance out each other," sophomore Tess Gundacker said.

Many who attended the night left questioning the type of media they personally consume.

"Before watching it I was totally into reality TV because it's super entertaining. Obviously, I knew it wasn't a super great platform but I was fine with watching it. Now I'm taking a step back and realizing 'Okay yeah, that industry is actually really toxic'," Morgan said.

Limiting time on social media can promote change in the way that women are portrayed in the media.

Throughout the movie, the narrator elaborated on how photoshop plays a big role in social media while also reminding students how common social media is misused.

"Social media should be for you, what you post should be for yourself and for your friends. You shouldn't have to feel like you have to edit your pictures so much, or photoshop things," Gundacker said.

There was an overall consensus among students that because of the media's unrealistic beauty standards for women, girls look to photoshop to enhance their images.

While the female students that attended the event would love to go to another, the male turnout was reportedly low.

"I think it is extremely important for many male students to go to this...I don't think, especially at our school, that males realize the amount of privilege that they have just from comments, or being paid, or impressions. I think it's critical that they learn and they grow and they use their privilege to speak out against the gender equality issues that are all over our world," Gundacker said.

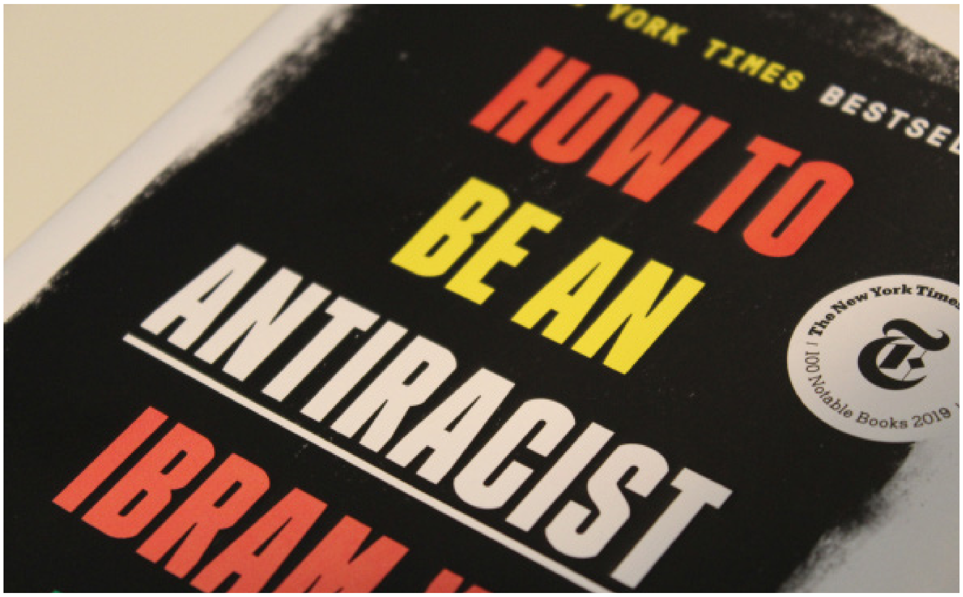
Moving forward, Gundacker and Morgan hope to educate their peers, family, and friends, while also continuing to learn themselves.

"I think it's important to continue the conversation about gender inequality, in the workforce, in the world, in our country, everywhere. I think from this I will make it a priority of mine to continue the conversation and continue learning," Gundacker said.

DEI Committee Holds First Teacher Moderated Book Club for Parents

The book How to Be an Anti-Racist by Dr. Ibram X. Kendi details how individuals can combat systemic racism

Griffin Ruebner and Erin Hambidge | Staff Writers



Blueprint Photo/Zoe Edelman

As the Black Lives Matter movement sweeps through the country as a result of countless injustices, Acalanes has taken steps to educate not only students but also parents about racism and inequality.

Acalanes parents had the opportunity to participate in a book club featuring How to Be an Anti-Racist by Dr. Ibram X. Kendi, a historian and one of America's leading antiracist voices, on Sept. 22. The Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee (DEI) put on the event along with Acalanes teachers and administration.

The original idea was for Acalanes to participate in a quarterly cross-district book club on the same work, but they opted out and chose to wait until after a school race forum was held. Instead, Acalanes held their discussion on the book and will join the other schools for next quarter's club.

DEI co-chair Natasha Kapoor-Acuña shed light on why the district chose the specific book.

"It really resonated with what everyone wanted to talk about and think about right now. I think the subject matter was very relevant regarding what is going on in the world at the moment," Kapoor-Acuña said.

The book focused on the idea that in the world there are only racist and anti-racist actions, which many found very interesting.

"One thing is that I like this paradigm that you can't just not be a racist. That to be an anti-racist requires a level of engagement where you are stepping into a space of conflict in order to make an impact," Wellness Center intake specialist Casey Sasner said.

Several teacher volunteers moderated the discussion, one of which, Spanish teacher Gretchen Schwab, felt that one of the most important parts of participating during the meeting was to expect discomfort.

"I am somebody who feels comfortable being uncomfortable having these conversations. It's not that I'm comfortable doing it, I've just gotten okay with the discomfort over the years," Schwab said. "I should be doing this because I have the personal resources and I have the desire to make change."

For many participants, hearing about the experiences of race and equity that parents shared was eye-opening.

"I do believe I live in a chosen bubble. I don't think I consciously choose to live in one, but there are moments where I'm like that's not the reality I thought I was living in," Schwab said.

While it may be shocking to hear of the racial injustices present in our community, it is necessary to understand them, as that is the first step to uprooting the racism in our society and own lives. The book club helps achieve that understanding, and start a broader conversation in the Acalanes community.

"I felt hope and empowerment that we can continue to do this work, that I have a voice that matters and a message that I can help spread. I think a lot of what I take away from this is that my work is not done. It will never be done," Schwab said.

There may be a day when skin color no longer is the cause of the current hate and violence that plagues our society, but this is a fight that has been fought for hundreds of years, ever since we established race as a method of division between us.

Lisa Spiegler, a parent attendee at the book club, spoke on how this was an important idea for her to recognize.

"I think it was eye-opening to me to hear how long we've had problems in this country, the concept of whiteness, and how that concept was not really here initially. It was created in order to have a caste system in this country," Spiegler said.

It may be shocking and unsettling to realize how far back our racial problems go, but it is necessary to understand them to prompt more conversations at home and to continually be an antiracist.

"I think the biggest thing for me is to educate myself and my daughter, so that we can act appropriately and stand up and fight against the racist institutions, policies, and practices that are very ingrained in our society," Spiegler said. "And I think that unless we educate ourselves about what the problems are we're never going to be able to solve them."

Kapoor-Acuña explained that the end goal of the book club was to promote the idea that as a group, we can fight back against racism and hate.

"I hope we all took away that we are not alone in this work. We have a community that cares about this work and is interested in this work, and we have partners. We can make change together" Kapoor-Acuña said.

Students Travel Out of State to Take the SAT

COVID-19 restrictions place students under pressure as application deadlines near

Julia Poole and Juliet Becker | Online Feature Editor and Staff Writer

Blueprint Graphic/Mara Korzeniowska

Usually, students fret outside the Acalanes classrooms on an early Saturday morning, awaiting the one of the largest determinators of their college fate: the SAT.

This year, however, many students are traveling out of state to take the SATs due to multiple cancellations by schools in efforts of preventing the spread of COVID-19.

After cancelling both the Aug. and Sept. test dates, Acalanes will offer the SAT on Wednesday, Oct. 14 for seniors, and the PSAT on Saturday, Oct. 17 for juniors.

“We needed to prioritize the SAT for seniors, and hope to add an administration later for other students to add in. I do think the most fair approach is to offer the opportunity to students who have the shortest timeframe and the highest need,” Associate Principal Mike Plant said.

The priority testing system allows seniors with rapidly-approaching college applications to receive their scores. Other students, however, worry that the lack of test scores hinders their ability to apply for college.

“Because I am considering going to university internationally, there are different requirements than applying to universities in the US, and I will need to take the SAT to be able to apply,” junior Autumn Long said.

Math teacher Misha Buchel and his son, Jonas Buchel, recently traveled to Des Moines, Iowa to take the SAT.

“Jonas wanted to take it because he didn’t yet know where he wanted to apply, and he wanted to have the opportunity to have that be part of his application process, and so we were very fortunate that we had the means and the opportunity to be able to put that together,” Misha Buchel said.

While taking the SAT is critical for applying to some colleges, some students argue that traveling for standardized testing highlights our privilege.

“SAT is supposed to be a standardized test where everyone has an equal opportunity. But when you realize that students with more resources are able to afford extensive tutoring, take the test multiple times, and have the opportunity to travel somewhere in order to take the test on a date that is convenient for them, you really start to rethink how leveled the playing field really is,” junior Ella Morris said.

Although traveling to other states to take the SAT seems drastic to some, other students understand the competition amongst their peers that drive them to go to such lengths.

“I am not against it, people should do what they want but it would really suck if someone traveled to take the SAT and they didn’t end up getting the score they wanted,” senior Sterling Mosley said.

Acalanes nurse Dvora Citron also believes that students who travel during a pandemic for the SATs have more resources than most.

“There are only certain students that have the privilege to be able to afford to go out of state to take the SAT. To me, that really pointed out a great inequity in the system of college applications and admissions, and that almost bothered me more than the health risk,” Citron said.

Hannah Welling, Testing Coordinator at Acalanes, believes the pandemic has exacerbated this inequity between students.

“The financial impact on families creates an unfair advantage to students who may not have the means or resources available to take the exams due to the COVID pandemic,” Welling said.

Not only are students traveling out of state equipped with an advantage, but many administrators suspect the standardized test itself is flawed. Wes Cedros, Director of Student Services at Tamalpais Union High School District, was involved in the decision not to become a test site due to COVID-19. Cedros thinks standardized tests do not consider the disadvantages among minority groups.

“What standardized exams don’t do well is account for the inherent bias present in our educational system. If you are a student of color, a student in a low socio-economic bracket, a student speaking English as a second language or a homeless youth, the SAT or similar test is probably not going to accurately reflect your academic ability or potential for success in college,” Cedros said.

Like Acalanes, Tamalpais District is also struggling with the decision to cancel standardized tests. Cedros thinks the problem lies much deeper than the recent complications with COVID-19.

"They [College Board and ACT] are independent companies with a business model that gives schools the lion's share of the work and responsibility, while providing a small bit of compensation that doesn't even cover our costs. That inevitably and regrettably puts us at odds with parents, when we can't follow through on the promises the College Board makes on our behalf," Cedros said.

The College Board's model is now integral in the college administration process. Some members of the Acalanes community believe standardized tests are a large part of our competitive culture.

"Parents want to keep the doors of opportunity open so that kids have the most access to routes that lead to success. Sometimes I feel like we need to expand our definition of success and standardized tests kind of fall into an old-school paradigm, but families feel like they have to 'play the game,'" Plant said.

Many believe that students would benefit from breaking with the community's competitive culture.

"I think it's really important to step back constantly and just know what's right for you before loading all these things up by getting crazy in the 'treadmill' because you've got this narrow focus that that's all that matters when actually what matters is what's going on right now in your life," Citron said.

PICLARITY
a new way to get professional photos
$150 AN HOUR. ALWAYS.
@piclarity
piclarity.com

Does 2020 have you rethinking your current COVID hideaway?

Let us find you a VIP (Very Inviting Property) for your new SIP.

Hey, we know this lady! DONS former football director and BEST team mom ever. Cari Thrasher, is now a Real Estate Team Player. She would love to hear from you.

Cari Thrasher
925.876.3345
cpthrasher@comcast.net

ks

Kim Siegel
Realtor | Don Mom
kim@kimsiegel.com
925.297.9262
DRE 02085961

COMPASS

925.878.9964 | TomStack.com | BRE #01501769
Coldwell Banker 2013-2019 Top 100 Realtor, Northern CA
Diablo Magazine Five Star Real Estate Agent, 7 time winner
International President's Circle 2019 | Eco Broker Certified

TomStack REAL ESTATE
"Striking a Chord in Our Community"
COLDWELL BANKER REALTY

Partying Through the Pandemic

As isolation-weary students forego social distancing, the District questions how to address problematic behavior

Jamie Lattin | Editor-in-Chief

It's cramped in the house. Shoulders brush shoulders with a mumbled "my bad". Drinks pass carefully from person to person to avoid spilling. Breath and music hang in the stagnant air. It's not an abnormal sight for a high school party. But now, its consequences may span far beyond disappointed parents and a headache in the morning.

As teenagers are one of the demographics most responsible for the transmission of COVID-19, their social distancing practices have a direct impact on the numbers in Contra Costa County. Despite wanting to prevent a spike in numbers, the Lafayette police and Acalanes Union High School District (AUHSD) administration have had difficulty enacting disciplinary measures for students who violate social distancing guidelines.

The precedent is muddy for discipline outside of school– traditionally, administrators don't intervene unless the issue affects a student's experience on campus.

"What the legal requirements are is if there's a nexus to school, meaning that someone either did or something happened to them that then impacted them in school, the school would legally be able to step in and take action," Acalanes Principal Travis Bell said. "So if there's something that happened on a weekend that then is coming onto the campus and impacting the learning that's taking place on campus, then we have the authority to step in and make decisions and determinations in order to help make sure that that student can get the education he or she deserves."

This distinction is typically reserved for instances of assault or harassment that follow a student into the classroom rather than students partying. As there is little to no legal precedent, the AUHSD relies on education to prevent large gatherings.

"The District will focus enforcement on behaviors while on campus and will certainly increase education around off-campus behaviors. Behavior matters. Face coverings and distancing matters. It is our best defense against the pandemic in our pre-vaccine status," AUHSD Superintendent John Nickerson said.

This education focuses on emphasizing how student behavior affects the spread of the virus and what it means to be a good citizen amid the pandemic.

"The nexus for us to be able to discipline students for having a party on the weekend really isn't there at this point, but we have the social obligation and ethical requirements to continue to promote critical thinking and science data-backed research on how this virus is spreading and how to help make sure that our students are making the right decisions so that we as a community, both locally and then ultimately nationally and globally can return to whatever normal is going to look like moving forward," Bell said.

The District continues to work with the Lafayette Police Department, especially in regard to illicit student behavior occurring in the Acalanes parking lot.

"If we find out who was here and there were things happening on our campus, we certainly can follow up with discipline, but often we get ambiguous wind of what's happened on the weekends and remnants of something in the parking lot," Bell said.

Some college campuses have gone so far as to suspend and expel students who throw parties and violate social distancing guidelines. Syracuse University, a private institution in New York State, recently suspended 23 students for gathering in a large group.

"The world is watching, and they expect you to fail. Prove them wrong. Be better. Be adults. Think of someone other than yourself. And also, do not test the resolve of this university to take swift action to prioritize the health and well-being of our campus and Central New York community," Syracuse Vice Chancellor for Strategic Initiatives and Innovation J. Michael Haynie said in a statement to the community.

AUHSD administrators don't view this level of discipline as realistic considering the

This party is so sick!
And we don't even have to worry about covid because it doesn't affect kids!
Yeah!
SK

Blueprint Cartoon/Seth Kline

wide differences between college and high school.

"Colleges typically require a compact that students must sign to live or be on campus committing to responsible behavior. The colleges are taking big risks allowing students on campus. These compacts often spell out consequences. While expulsion can seem severe, I think the consequences are usually pretty clear in the agreements," Nickerson said.

Acalanes requires no such agreement, considering that it is a public school with a student body composed almost entirely of minors. This may contribute to the continued prevalence of large parties.

More than 100 students attended one such party over the weekend of Sept. 12.

"I know that a lot of people went, and that it was mostly upperclassmen. I'm glad I didn't go, and I will definitely stay away from the people who went. If someone had corona and went to the party it's very likely a lot of people would have contracted it due to the sharing of bottles and vapes as well as it being extremely crowded, from what I gathered on social media," an anonymous junior said.

Most students consider large gatherings like the aforementioned party ill-advised.

"I think that being with a small group of friends—like 10 or so people—in an outdoor environment is fine, but the classic 'high school party' is a really bad idea. When you have a large group of people together it's nearly impossible to account for everyone and whether or not they have been exposed to the virus," senior Ryan Bea said.

News of the party quickly reached Acalanes Athletic Director Randy Takahashi, who notified coaches.

"I was tipped off by a parent that this had happened, and so immediately I sent an email out to all of the coaches that were running sports camps," Takahashi said. "I wanted a message sent out to all the families and I wanted them to address this in their camps the next time that the kids came in."

Coaches then corresponded with their individual teams, urging them not to come to practice if they had attended the party.

"This is a judgement free zone, but we cannot allow any student who attended this party to participate in the camps until they have been tested," volleyball coach and social studies teacher Haley Walsh said in a message to the team. "We just want to make sure we are keeping the program safe."

This isn't the first time that sports camps have taken precautions. On the weekend of July 4, the boys lacrosse coach took preventative measures to ensure his players' safety.

"He knew all of his players were going to be going places and doing things. And he said, 'You know what, we're going to cancel for a week. I just want to be safe.' So our athletic community as a whole has been, I believe, very responsive to the needs of the camps," Takahashi said.

Many students consider disregard for social distancing disrespectful to the rest of the community.

"I do know a lot of people who have continued partying during the pandemic and it is honestly really disappointing. Everybody has a birthday and most people are willing to overlook throwing large celebrations right now in the name of public safety and it's really foolish that a lot of students think that they are the exception," senior Emily Ingram said.

While the Acalanes staff understands the difficulties of isolation, it urges students to find alternatives to in-person-gatherings.

"First, I absolutely know how hard of a situation we are in. But I also know it is temporary and not permanent. I remind myself of that often. There are many alternatives to large group gatherings in person. Take advantage of family time, the social options offered through school, clubs and virtual game nights with friends," Leadership and Ethnic Studies teacher Katherine Walton said.

Many students have continued to adhere to county guidelines, electing to gather in small, socially distanced groups.

"I've found a couple of friends that I really trust and I've hung out with them, and I've connected with people online," junior Anna Toldi said.

Although online communities can't replace in-person gatherings altogether, students have found creative ways to take advantage of social media. The Los Angeles-based organization Subculture Party, which holds youth-centered online raves every week, markets itself as a "COVID-safe way to party."

"Online raves are typically zoom calls of around 300 to 500 people. There are sometimes multiple hosts who DJ and other live performers. One of the hosts cycles through zoom members and pins people's videos," Ingram said. "It's really fun because you can still get ready and do the things you would normally do while at a party but while in the safety and comfort of your own home with those who you are closest with. It's also a really cool way to interact with new and different people."

These alternative social activities help reduce coronavirus numbers in the community and may contribute to the reality of schools reopening with a hybrid model.

"While the data show adolescents are less at risk, asymptomatic transmission rates between adolescents can be high… and adolescents interact with parents and grandparents who are much more at risk. Do your part. If for no other reason, do it for the adults and older adults in your lives," Nickerson said.

COMPASS
4 Generations of family locally
19 Years of real estate experience
JUSTIN BUNDY
REALTOR
justinbundy.com
925-330-0579
GO DONS!
Make it a great year!
Your community is so proud of you all!

Greenleaf
PROVISIONS

STOCK UP FOR THE WEEK!

prepared food (fresh & frozen)

affordable groceries

wine & liquor

No-contact delivery with masks and gloves

FREE DELIVERY
with $200 minimum order

Owned by Chef Hugh Groman
as seen on KTVU

Acalanes High Class of '89

call to order:
510.647.5165 ext 1

or shop online at:
greenleafprovisions.com

FEELING TRAPPED?!

Nearby apartments. Month-to-month – furnished or not. Spare room for your kid, a quiet office.

Natasha Kapoor-Acuña
natasha@kasaproperties.com

kasa PROPERTIES

Systems: Bias Incident Reporting System

Under rising calls for more transparency, the AUHSD created a new system to report biases from the community.

Shrida Pandey | Online News Editor

Incident reporting team in session
Report

Blueprint Graphic/Seth Kline

After Acalanes High School Union District (AUHSD) students leaked racist and derogatory social media posts about people of color, students and teachers on campus continue to call for more accountability and action from the administration about racist incidents. This year the District created a new system that encourages safer campuses .

The AUHSD implemented a bias incident reporting system at the beginning of the 2020-2021 school year for students and teachers to report any instances of racist or discriminatory behavior to a Bias Incident Reporting Team (BIRT).

The District implemented the system soon after the 2020 George Floyd protests to take more action towards bias and hateful acts.

"It came about as a district-wide decision and it really happened after the murder of George Floyd and some of the local demonstrations and marches for racial justice that happened in Walnut Creek, Lafayette, and other places. [It] sparked a conversation with our Associate Superintendent of Human Resources and Student Services... who knew we needed a system to keep record of these bias incidents that happen on our campus," Principal Travis Bell said.

The BIRT allows students and teachers to report any acts of hate speech, discrimination, or racism through a Google Form on the school's website. Once someone reports, a member of the BIRT team will reach out to provide them with emotional support and resources.

"Especially when we are in high school, it can be really harmful. It takes a lot for people to withstand those [bias incidences] so it helps to be able to have someone to help you process those thoughts," Wellness Counselor Allen Choi said.

BIRT, composed of teachers, administrators, and Wellness Staff meets once a week, to discuss reported incidents, actions taken, and ways to address the staff and community.

"There is a team of people and every week we go over the different incidents that happen and then we come up with [the] next steps." Guidance Counselor and BIRT member Marissa Meadows said.

During their meetings, the committee also decides if the perpetrator of the act requires disciplinary action, restorative practices, or both. Restorative practices include educating the offender, while disciplinary action is a much more severe punishment like losing the ability to participate in school activities.

"We are trying to take a more restorative approach but obviously there are certain things, I believe, that would require punishment," Meadows said.

To create more transparency between the reporter and the committee, a member will also communicate with the reporting student or teacher once the committee makes a decision on the required actions.

"It is a very good thing that the incident team, actually circles back to the person who was offended from an act because it provides a way for students to receive answers," junior Sylvia Deng said.

The BIRT tracks the data of the reports monthly, so different school sites can see the areas of equity they most need to work on.

"We have put together amongst the five [school] sites a forum that will give details and data from each month and it will track the reports that come through and we are going to [put it on our website] at the beginning of each month," Associate Principal Andrea Powers said.

Most students met the new system with positive feedback.

"This allows students more protection and also lets them feel more secure in a school setting. I think the school creating something like this is very beneficial to our student body," junior Caroline Crossland said.

However, some worry about the effectiveness the system will have on school culture due to the remote nature of reporting and that education should be a more pressing issue.

"[The bias reporting system] has the potential to help people feel safer and deal with these issues more quickly and efficiently but I don't think the reporting system by itself is going to improve the school. If you wanna create change, you've got to go to the source which is the people," senior Lynne Zhao said.

Still, students believe the Bias Incident Reporting System will hold students and teachers more accountable while creating an equitable school.

"I think this general awareness the school has been working to develop with the combination of the reporting system, cohort Academies are going to improve the environment at school," Zhao said.

Latinx History Month Shines Light on a Rich, Artistic, and Overlooked Past

A deeper look at Latinx contributions in American society today

Marisa Guerra Echeverria, Lyanne Wang, and Mara Korzeniowska | Staff Writers and Photographer

From Rancho Acalanes to the "Home of the Dons", Latin culture continues to leave a lasting influence on Acalanes. Our very own mascot, the "Don", is an honorary Spanish title often used to describe wealthy Mexican landowners. With its roots tracing deeply in our own backyard, we must honor the impact of Latin contributions to Acalanes, and more importantly, American history.

As Latinx History Month occurs from Sept. 15 to Oct. 15, the Acalanes community gears towards bringing awareness and inclusivity to Latinx culture and the issues it faces.

The month-long commemoration began on Sept. 15, a date specifically chosen to honor the anniversary of independence of several Latin American countries: Mexico, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, and Nicaragua, all of whom were liberated from Spain in the 1800s. Latinx History Month acknowledges these countries' break from colonial powers and focuses on the vast histories, cultures, and achievements of the people within the United States who descend from Latin American immigrants.

Despite its rich past, students and teachers alike often overlook Latinx history. Groups such as the Institute for Latino and Latin American Studies (ILaLS) at Saint Mary's College are actively working to raise awareness about issues relevant to Latin America and Latin populations.

Blueprint Graphic/Mara Korzeniowska

"It is important that people understand more of the history of the region and countries of Latin America, which includes vibrant cultures that pre-date the conquest; a rich literary, cultural, artistic and linguistic history," ILaLS Board Member Dr. María Luisa Ruiz said.

Latin culture is not simply appealing aspects like parties and piñatas, but it also embraces a challenging history and the values of hard work, resilience, and desire to succeed through education.

"Latinx History Month should be highlighted to remind everyone of the important role Latino communities have played in the economic, cultural, and political development of the United States," ILaLS Board Member Dr. Alvaro Ramírez said. "They are an essential part of the history of this county and have made and are making important contributions in every facet of American life."

The many celebrations of Latinx History Month provide ways for Americans to recognize the essential contributions and community-building work Latinx communities supply.

"This month is an opportunity to dispel misunderstandings, prejudice and fear about these populations through education about the history of the countless contributions of Latinx communities in their places of origin and the US," Ruiz said.

Still, due to the lack of a solid understanding of Latin culture and history today, many don't know what it truly means to be Latinx.

For one, contrary to popular belief, Latinx is not its own race, but an ethnicity that encompasses all races from various countries of Latin American origin. Racial diversity within the Latinx community is common, disproving the stereotype that all Latinx people must "look a certain way" to fit into their ethnic group.

"I want people to understand that there are different cultures, countries, and backgrounds [within the Latinx community] and that there is no blueprint that every Latinx person lives, looks, and talks the same way," freshman Lux Downing-Griggs said.

There is also a common misunderstanding that all Latinx people speak Spanish. In fact, several Latin American countries do not speak Spanish at all, including Brazil, Haiti, and Guyana. Therefore, it is inaccurate to judge Americans of Latin descent as "more-or-less Latinx" based on their ability or inability to speak Spanish.

Most people also misunderstand the proper terminology of Latin American identity between three terms: Hispanic, Latino, and Latinx. The word "Hispanic" refers to people who originate from Spain or Spanish-speaking countries. This differs from "Latino/a," a gendered term describing a person with origins from Latin America, and "Latinx," a non-gendered variation of the same term.

"Having a discussion about the name change from Hispanic Heritage Month to Latinx Heritage Month could help people understand that Latinx communities are not a monolith, but are complex, diverse and ever-changing. Using Latinx is an effort by some to center the lives of indigenous, Brazilian, Afro-Latin and other non-Spanish speaking people in this celebration," Ruiz said.

This change from "Hispanic" to "Latinx" emphasizes the focus on Latin American heritage rather than the history of Spanish conquest and colonization. It highlights the pride and positivity of Latin American culture.

To fully celebrate Latinx History Month, one must learn of both the resilience and adversity of the Latinx community.

"We often see the fiestas and the lightheartedness of Latinx culture but it's important to know about the struggle that Latinx people came through to get there. Put simply, there are layers to every culture," junior Sofia Gonzalez said.

As the Latinx community grows into the largest minority group in the United States, more Americans are clamoring for increased Latinx representation in American media, politics, history, and education.

With the current focus on racial equity in academic and work environments, it is important for schools to celebrate the Latinx experience during and beyond Latinx History Month. This would mean not only promoting the inclusivity during race equity workshops, but within curriculums in core academic subjects year-round as well.

"It is also important to acknowledge Latinx history is US history. Indigenous [and Latinx] populations predate the formation of the US as a nation." Ruiz said.

Many Acalanes students also call attention to the need for further and better education surrounding Latin American history.

"We should learn a lot more about cultures, like Latinx culture in our classes, and not just Spanish classes," Gonzalez said.

Despite there being an arguably insufficient amount, the content taught in Spanish curriculums helps raise student awareness of other cultures.

"Spanish teachers do different things to acknowledge and celebrate Latinx History Month. Some play the Grito de Dolores and mention the Mexican revolutionary leader, Padre Miguel Hidalgo," Spanish teacher Elizabeth Gough said.

In addition to the information provided in Spanish classes, clubs at Acalanes such as the Latinos Unidos Club strive to educate others and create an environment for specifically Latinx students to connect.

"Right now, Acalanes isn't the safest place for people of color. So Latinos Unidos is pretty much there to create that safe space," Latinos Unidos Club President Zevin Acuña said.

While partnering with the Acalanes Leadership Diversity Board, the Latinos Unidos Club is ready to address Latinx History Month at Acalanes.

"We are planning on celebrating Latinx History Month," Leadership Diversity Board member and sophomore Hailey Stripling said. "We are celebrating by partnering with the Latinos Unidos Club to host a movie night, a discussion on Latin history, spotlighting Hispanic artists and music, releasing a special newsletter on Latin history, and more during the week."

To Latinx staff members and students, a school-wide response to Latinx History Month is only the first step in recognizing the importance of minorities.

"I think educating students more on Latinx culture and history would make Latinx students feel more accepted. There are many alleyways to do this. Emails, Canvas announcements, Zoom events, etc. that don't have to be directly included in [the] curriculum. For example, just letting people know that it's [Latinx History] Month is a step in the right direction," Gonzalez said.

Latinx History Month presents an opportunity for students and staff to familiarize themselves with the various cultures and traditions of their student body. Promoting inclusivity of all students begins with awareness.

"Not only will it make Latinx people feel more included, but the culture is so rich that other people deserve to learn about it. It's also, for a lot of students, fun to discover the diversity of culture in their communities," Gonzalez said.

While isolated at home, students can celebrate by educating themselves. Individuals can immerse themselves in Latinx culture and perspectives by taking the time to learn about Latinx contributions to society, as well as to their own community.

"If you're in school, especially in high school or college, you should take some courses on Latin American studies, or courses that deal with the history and causes of immigration from Latin America to the United States. You can also read novels, poetry, plays, and essays by Latin American and Latino and Latina authors," Dr. Ramírez said.

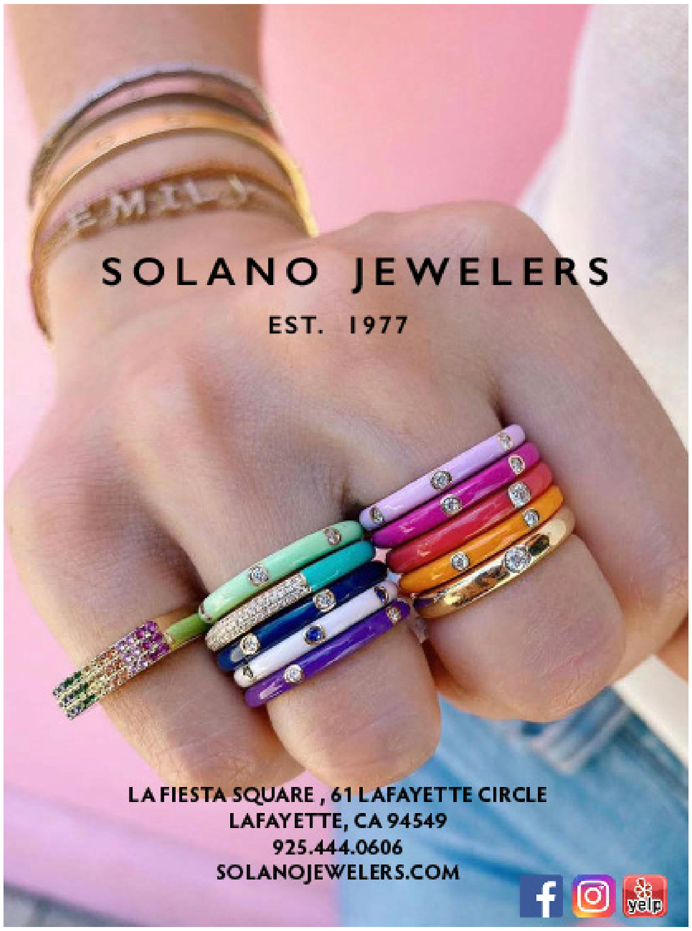
Latinx History Month provides a chance to appreciate Latinx culture beyond just a single month. Lifting up Latinx voices is a task students and staff can work towards all year long.

"As we spend this month celebrating history let's also center the lives and contributions of our Latinx neighbors and community members who are often rendered invisible as they go about their lives and should be 'celebrated' as valuable to the fabric of the Bay Area, the state and the country," Ruiz said.

Blueprint Graphic/ Arlyne Noguera

DIABLO
FOODS
LAFAYETTE

An Acalanes
favorite
since 1968



SOLANO JEWELERS
EST. 1977

LA FIESTA SQUARE , 61 LAFAYETTE CIRCLE
LAFAYETTE, CA 94549
925.444.0606
SOLANOJEWELERS.COM

NIGHTINGALE
photography

FAMILY PORTRAITS

Celebrate family this Fall
with
relaxed & unique portraits.

Christina Hernandez | 510-338-2997
nightingaleportraits.com.com

NAVIGATING RACIAL CONSCIOUSNESS:

A COLLECTION OF RACIAL ENCOUNTERS AND EXPERIENCES WHILE GROWING UP

BY LEDA ABKENARI, LIAISON EDITOR

To Our Readers,

Throughout my three years as a member and editor of Blueprint, I have always been confident in our mission to amplify and represent the unheard voices on campus. After the events of an unprecedented year filled with a call for racial justice, as a person of color, it is a victory to see our voices finally beginning to be heard. In this spirit of elevating voices in our community, Blueprint wishes to use our platform and our cover story to publish not only my personal racial experiences, but those of my peers who identify as Black, Indigenous, or people of color to write a true story on race.

This article aims to encapsulate the navigation of racial identity of students like me growing up in predominantly white spaces. Blueprint, through my writing and interviews gathered, hopes to represent the multiple perspectives that come with racial as a social construct, coinciding both appreciation and alienation.

For this story, I envisioned that the sharing of stories from those underrepresented on campus could help provide a platform to educate others, drawing from both their positive and negative racial experiences growing up in our community. Additionally, the story aims to exemplify the beauty and power of diverse racial backgrounds, rather than allowing race to be something BIPOC members are continuously shamed for in systematically oppressive white institutions.

I invite you to read this story in its entirety with an open mind to understand the varied perspectives of community members. Now is the time to amplify the unheard and underrepresented. Now is the time to learn from our own hardships and those of others in order to induce change not only within ourselves but also in the institutions around us. Staying silent is no longer an option. We, as a community, must accept discomfort in order to recognize the faults that we have made. Accountability and change begin when the collective chooses to move forward rather than remain silent.

--Leda Abkenari (She/Her)

2020 has been a whirlwind of events, ranging from a global pandemic to wildfires to an election. Despite being what many consider a catastrophic year, it brought one dominating movement to light: the Black Lives Matter movement (BLM). Amidst the constant sprawl of negativity in current events, the silence from constant sorrow brought forth a movement of empowerment and racial equity.

2020 has brought forward the voices of Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) individuals and amplified their voices and experiences, emphasizing racial consciousness and encouraging the re-evaluations of many institutions across America.

Despite being led by people of the BIPOC community, the movement is a call for justice, reform, and allyship. Those in support do not have to be a member of the BIPOC community, they must be able to stand in solidarity with them.

Through creating racial understanding and awareness, BLM encourages racial pride, justice, and a navigation of racial consciousness.

Its founders, Alicia Garza, Patrisse Cullors, and Opal Tometi, became racial justice warriors and models of racial pride. As they encourage self-love and unity,

LAYOUT BY ZOE EDELMAN

racial pride was not something, for many BIPOC individuals, that could happen overnight.

In light of the movement, many institutions across America revised and revisited their conscious actions in regards to racial awareness and equality.

Beginning this 2020-2021 school year, the Acalanes Union High School District (AUHSD) has specified racial equity as an important educational priority. Dedicating class periods and cohort academies to provide awareness on subjects centered on race, the Courageous Conversations Compass begins these weighted discussions.

The Pacific Education Group created the compass as a tool to help individuals recognize how they may process racial information. It illustrates four quadrants that headspaces enter when discussing race: believing, thinking, feeling and acting.

The AUHSD uses the compass to help instill a stable "entrance" into discussions of race in hopes to continue the progression of dialogues on racial pride and equity.

As BIPOC individuals journey throughout the systems of America while growing up, they inevitably face racial experiences and encounters. Racial awareness comes at an early age for many and continues to grow as individuals progress throughout each system. For many BIPOC individuals, this began on the first day of school.

While white individuals may have come to terms with race gradually as they grew up, BIPOC individuals confronted race at an early age. A navigation of racial consciousness and pride went hand in hand with their journey from childhood to adulthood.

Many young children lack knowledge and a filter, leading them to speak their minds regardless of their understanding. More often than not, primary school becomes a time when BIPOC individuals face discrimination without even knowing it. This lack of knowledge on both sides contributes to creating a subconscious racial division.

Despite this, when the final school bell rings, BIPOC children return home to a place without judgment, where rich senses of culture and heritage are able to restore the racial pride that their experiences at school may have damaged.

As communities of BIPOC students continue through the education system, the ignorant remarks of their peers begin to make sense. This understanding that the remarks made by their peers were intended to be offensive and were no longer coming from a place of ignorance, changed the meaning of the incidents and encounters on the part of the recipient.

Middle school is often a time of self-discovery as well, which brought some students closer to their racial and cultural identities. This budding pride could occasionally help them dismiss discriminatory experiences.

As students continued to return home to childhood traditions of holidays, cultures, and cuisines, race enhanced a sense of community.

Students continued this process of racial navigation as they entered high school. The newfound maturity that came with adulthood began to bolster their perseverance. Rather than allowing discrimination to continue to occur, individuals gained a sense of self, found their voices, and began advocacy.

By beginning to recognize and advocate against the racial hardships they may face, the beauty of racial identity further grows, and navigation continues.

Blueprint interviewed over 70 willing BIPOC students on campus about their navigation to racial consciousness through their experiences and encounters with race while growing up. Blueprint hopes to expand community perspectives by sharing their stories through these interviews.

Childhood:

Riley Koo, Sophomore, He/Him
"I just remember me always knowing that I was Chinese, it wasn't really like one moment that I understood that I was different from other people. It's always just kind of been there because my parents have taught me that I'm Chinese and made me more proud of my heritage."

Molly Ransdell, Junior, She/Her
"My parents had me take Mandarin lessons starting when I was in 1st grade and I have been a part of a non-profit Chinese dance group since second grade. Even though I have white parents, I'm so grateful that they kept me involved in these activities because they allowed me to make connections and meet other Asian people in this white-dominated society who I wouldn't have met otherwise."

Kea Yoshinaka, Sophomore, She/Her
"It [race] hasn't been massive, but it has definitely been part of my life because I would bring Asian food to school in elementary school, and everyone would be like, 'Ew! What's that?' because everyone else had American food and I didn't."

"I remember in fifth grade one of my friends who is also Asian liked this guy, and he was like 'I would never date an Asian' and that's totally stuck with me."

Andrew Sappal, Sophomore, He/Him
"My earliest encounter with race was in elementary school, and some kids wouldn't let me play basketball with them because I was too dark. It didn't make sense at first but as I got older, I understood. Even though it was when I was young

it shows prejudice towards people of color even at a young age whether it was based on their parents influence or somewhere else."

Liv Rao, Sophomore, She/Her
"Race was super big for me growing up because I lived with my grandparents, my father's parents, for a while so I was surrounded by the Indian food, show, clothing, and accents. However once I started going to school I realized that not everyone ate the same food or talked the same way my grandparents did and that was some what of a 'daily' reminder."

Olivia Banks, Sophomore, She/Her
"The least vague memory I have is getting into an argument with my cousin when we were little over who was more Black. Hard to remember who won. The only reason there was any competition is because we knew that Black was beautiful and we both wanted to be. Nowadays I know without a doubt that I'd not qualify as Black enough not because of my blood or the color of my skin but because of where I live and the shades of everyone around me here. My perspective is this: race is a ridiculous concept that should only be referred to when a culture is appreciating itself and not in any detrimental way to another."

Amani Lynn Williams, Sophomore, She/Her
"I had just moved to Lafayette from Bermuda and I was so used to being around Black people, it was a culture shock. I remember it was my first day of school in kindergarten when I first experienced race. I walked in and no one looked like me. I remember hearing the whispers of how weird my hair looked and the yanking of it. I understood that there were different races, my parents told me how it was going to be and the feelings that I may experience"

"The pigment in our skin. The suns kissed darkest shades to sweet mahogany to the fair shades of brown. I love the diversity within the tones; no two skin shades is exactly the same."

Adolescence:

Liv Rao, Sophomore, She/Her
"Some of my earliest encounters with race were at school when I found I would have Indian food for lunch and other kids would ask about it or talk in an Indian accent to me. I did not understand the experience and one like this throughout elementary school and middle school because I thought it was something that kids did or something that came along with being Indian. Looking back I realize how hurtful and damaging it was for me; during middle school I used to wish that I wasn't Indian so people wouldn't have something to make comments on but people always find a way."

Nia Jeyakrishnan, Sophomore, She/Her
"I love the food, obviously: Indian food is the best. And of course the clothing, the saris, silver, Kurtas turbans: all of it. I found it so colorful and beautiful. And like, whenever I think about India, I think of Holi, the festival of color and like all of the colors and like flavor."

"I remember in Girl Scouts everyone was making a shape of themselves and then everyone got the white paper and then I got the brown. It wasn't like it was their fault at all. It was just, I guess I wanted the white one more than the black. They were trying to be inclusive, but it kind of felt weird having like a different one than everyone else. And it kind of created that division."

"I became more aware of my race when I was in seventh grade. And I realized it's a part of who I am, no matter what. And I should be proud of it."

Megan Go, Senior, She/Her
"I'll get a lot of comments on my intelligence and other common stereotypes. I would say my earliest encounters with race could be two things. I definitely was aware of people being a different race than me when I was young because I lived in San Francisco, which is a very diverse place compared to Lafayette. However, I never really fully understood how your race can impact your life until around middle school/high school which is when I started to be reminded of my race."

Olivia Banks, Sophomore, She/Her
"The kinks and coils in every strand of my hair. My own magical locks are unique but they still tie me to every other person of color."
"There are a lot of stereotypes about how my people are bold, passionate, and hotheaded; I own that. If being fierce is my legacy, then I will proudly be it and more. The actions I take are inspired by the daring ones of my predecessors who survived and I intend to as well."

Chloe Wu, Senior, She/Her
"When speaking about my race and racial experiences, I am proud to talk about my culture and the vast variety of food we eat. There is such a difference in cultures for any ethnicity and to be able to explore and teach people about different cultures is always cool."

"As I continue to observe and experience life as an Asian-American, it gives me confidence to be true to myself despite the harsh criticisms in today's world. A lot of the time, there's not a large discussion about racism towards Asians, but the stories from my family and friends and how they have handled the situation gives me strength to be resilient. It's hard to put just one thing into perspective about my race. I can't speak for every Asian, but in my experience, I think the most beautiful thing about our race is our generosity, our family values and the community we create, and the resilience we have when it comes to struggles."

Adulthood:

Zevin Acuña, Senior, He/Him
“I was just hanging out with my Black and Brown friends, which are most of my friends, in downtown Moraga where we were going to CVS to get some candy. Then, two cops started following us for no reason. They followed us out of the store and told us, at around 10 o’clock at night, ‘you guys shouldn’t be out here. If we see you again, we’re going to arrest you,’ and it was a whole big thing because there were white kids in the store as well that were in the same age as us, but we were the ones targeted. That was my first real wake up call in Lamorinda.”

“I use my feelings of being the victim in many situations and transform that into becoming a leader. For example, I have been subject to race-related experiences as well as racist altercations on and off-campus. I have transformed these feelings into action by creating a Latinx club on campus as well as being a part of the Committee for Multicultural Education Reform in the AUHSD.”

Victoria Flint, Junior, She/Her
“I feel like Hispanic people are always put under some type of oppression, which now comes in the form of ICE (Immigration and Customs Enforcement) racism, blunt or systemic, and racist attitudes towards so-called ‘Mexicans’ which is hurtfully used to generalize all Hispanics and Latinx people. Even with that though, I feel like we are still proud to be wherever we are from in South America, and I really think that is what’s beautiful.”

Sylvia Deng, Junior, She/Her
“In preschool, I felt a slight sense of division, as the preschool I attended had kids of many different races. In elementary and middle school, I didn’t feel a sense of division between me and my peers as most of my peers were of the same race as me. However, in high school, in a white dominated community, I do somewhat feel a sense of division.”

Lauren Yee, Junior, She/Her
“When I moved to Lafayette I think it’s a bigger difference because you’re surrounded by people who don’t look like you, and you feel like they stereotype you. I sometimes feel like they’re staring at me. My dad has experienced some serious racism, like at Acalanes. We’re at the track for a meet one weekend and this one guy came up to my dad and was like “Your dog can’t be on the track”...and my dad was like “There’s literally a couple with their dog on the track walking” and they were a white couple and the guy said “I’m going to call homeland security on you. I’m going to call the police on you, boy” and he kept calling him boy which was awful.

“If I experience racial hardships it just motivates me to prove them wrong. It gets to a certain point when you need to start talking about it. When you experience racial hardships you feel more passionate about it, so you want to start talking about it to keep pushing people forward.”

Makenna Arase, Sophomore, She/They
“The most beautiful thing I find about my race is its long history and how all the art forms that were created during those times are intertwined with it. Whenever you see a historical landmark, you are met with great feats of art which are very intricate and difficult even with today’s technology.”

Riley Koo, Sophomore, He/Him
“My race gives me courage to know that my ancestors struggled and survived for so many years and that I need to do something with my life to show that I, as the next generation, was worth struggling for.”

Juan Ruiz-Sagrero, Sophomore, He/Him
“There hasn’t been any as of recently, maybe some microaggressions, but I haven’t seen those as much now days. Everyone’s a lot more woke about it. Everyone’s a lot more woke and more aware of it now than maybe a couple of years ago. Not saying that people weren’t aware of it a couple of years ago but now it’s really, it has always been an issue but it’s more of a glaring issue and people are saying something. A lot of people have reflected on it over quarantine so I feel like some people have matured more into that.”

Aerik Kunju, Junior, He/Him
“Recently, I’ve learned the importance of speaking about race and trying to understand other perspectives from both school and social media, and I think that incorporating that sort of education to younger students could be really good for white people as well as people of color.”

Christopher Cedeno, Sophomore, He/Him
“The racial hardships that I have faced have taught me that anyone can be a racist, but that not everyone is a racist.”

Kaleo Feinberg, Sophomore, He/Him
“The most beautiful thing about being mixed race is the fact that I can experience two cultures and two ways of life. It has also given me a step ahead of other people when understanding how to treat people as fair as possible.”

Kiara Machado, Senior, She/Her
“I am proud of knowing that I’m not apart of the majority especially in America. I think it holds a lot of honor because it kind of shows that even though this country is built on a white man’s success, people of color can still make it.”

Amani Williams, Sophomore, She/Her
“Knowing that my race has fought so hard and many lost

their lives in the struggle of obtaining what I take for granted, gives me strength to deal with my experiences based on race. It the knowledge that I'm not alone in this fight which gives me courage to keep going."

"That I'm fighting to prove statistics and people wrong. Being black isn't a burden but a blessing. I wouldn't change it for anything. It's the knowledge of knowing that America is design to keep us at the bottom, but we broke through fighting our way to the top. We are conquerors of system made to make us the conquered. I'm proud that we have fought and still are fighting to make things better and protect our natural rights."

Where We Are Now:

It is no secret that race is point source of discrimination in America. Our country's institutions are not built on equity. They were constructed on a foundation of white supremacy and continue to enable white success while systematically oppressing BIPOC individuals. Yet this only motivates BIPOC individuals to fight harder. In these times of inequality, they rise from the ashes each time they are burned and continue to fight.

Race goes hand-in-hand with beauty, heritage, and pride. It can be a source of strength rather than shame. However, navigating this journey requires significant education and other tools that enable full consciousness. One such tool is the aforementioned Courageous Conversations Compass.

The compass opens a gateway to begin an in-depth exploration of racial consciousness. But in order to do so, one must fully step beyond the entryway. Although the compass serves as a jumping-off point for weighted discussions of race, it is important to go deeper.

Understanding racial identity and consciousness is a multidimensional experience. The emotions our BIPOC brothers and sisters face can not always be broken down into four easy quadrants for white individuals to understand.

Teaching the navigation of race is not a one-stop destination; it is a journey through a multitude of uncharted territories. It is up to us to embark.

Recipe of the Issue: Pumpkin Bread

Chocolate Chip Pumpkin Bread

Aisha Mohanty | Staff Writer

Prep Time: 15 minutes
Start to finish: 3 hours and 10 minutes
Makes 2 loaves (each equivalent to 16 slices)
Kitchen Tips:
To ensure your loaf has a gently round top, grease or spray only the bottom of the pans
It's okay if the top of your loaf has a large, lengthwise crack; this is common in quick breads

INGREDIENTS
4 cups all-purpose flour
2 teaspoons baking soda
1 teaspoon salt
1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
½ teaspoon ground nutmeg
2 cups sugar
¾ cup butter or margarine, softened
4 eggs
½ cup water
1 can (15 oz) pumpkin (not pumpkin pie mix)
1 cup plus 2 tablespoons miniature semisweet chocolate chips
2 tablespoons chopped pecans
2 teaspoons sugar (for topping)

DIRECTIONS
Heat oven to 350℉.
Grease bottom of two 8x4-inch loaf pans with shortening; lightly flour (or spray bottoms of pans with cooking spray; do not flour)
In medium bowl stir flour, baking soda, salt, cinnamon, and nutmeg until mixed; set aside
In a large bowl, beat sugar and butter with an electric mixer on medium speed for 1 to 2 minutes or until creamy.
Add eggs, one at a time, beating well after each addition. Next, beat in water and pumpkin on low speed.
Add flour mixture; beat on low speed for about 1 minute, or until moistened.
Stir in 1 cup of the chocolate chips. Spread evenly in pans. Sprinkle loaves with remaining 2 tablespoons of chocolate chips, pecans, and 2 teaspoons of sugar.
Bake for 1 hour 5 minutes to 1 hour 15 minutes or until a toothpick inserted in the center comes out clean. Cool in pans for 10 minutes; transfer from pans onto cooling rack. Cool completely for around 1 ½ hours.

Blueprint Photos/Aisha Mohanty

The Surge in Video Game Streaming

How streaming can engage people of all ages

Alex Ariker and August Walker | Copy Editor and Staff Writer

With the emerging prevalence of streaming platforms like Twitch, watching video game broadcasts is now a part of daily life for students.

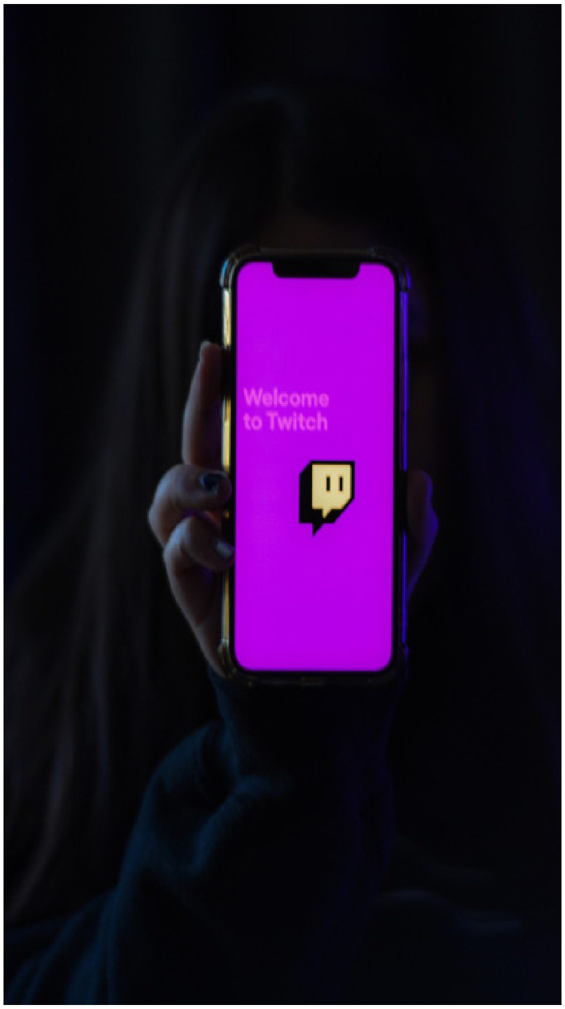
Streaming is a form of live media where the host or streamer records themselves playing a game in real-time for an audience. Streams also have a “live chat” where viewers can ask the streamer questions or type comments in real-time during the live stream.

As livestreaming continues to grow in popularity, Twitch has risen by far as the largest and most established broadcasting service.

“Streaming wasn’t a big thing a couple of years ago and it has definitely become more popular and more people are becoming Twitch streamers,” junior Kyle Thomason said.

Several factors explain this growth in popularity. However, it primarily stems from the educational appeal of watching video game streams for personal improvement.

For the most part, competitive gaming mirrors any other sport. They require practice and dedication, along with natural skill. By enabling an audience to watch a talented player display their skills, video game streams provide viewers tools to improve their own gameplay.



Blueprint Photo/Arlyne Noguera

“[By watching a streamer play a game] you can get multiple perspectives on the game that they are playing and the stream is kind of educational about the game,” sophomore Hunter Goyert said.

Many viewers also watch streamers for their personality and entertainment. In a way, the streamer acts like the host of a comedy show, but instead of doing skits, they play video games.

“I like the personality of the streamer and the interaction between the streamer and the chat. It’s kind of like watching someone else’s life through the television,” Thomason said.

Usually, streamers add depth to their live videos by interacting with their fans. Some streamers do this by responding to questions aloud or asking the chat questions. These activities give viewers a chance to establish closer relationships with their idols, ultimately helping them to create a unique bond.

Understandably, however, there is a gap between generations regarding interest in and understanding of streaming.

“I grew up in a time when video games and streamers were non-existent so I find it hard to understand why kids spend time watching games instead of playing them themselves,” Acalanes parent Craig Hilton said.

However, this perspective is not shared by all members of earlier generations. Plenty of older people watch gaming streams on Twitch or other platforms, and some even stream themselves. Digital Design teacher Chris Busse eventually came to understand the appeal of watching streams.

“It’s funny because you’re watching someone playing video games, you’re not even playing video games, and I thought ‘how is that entertaining’ and then I watched it and was like ‘oh, that’s kind of cool,’” Busse said. “It’s like watching your friend who’s way better than you beat a level, it’s interesting to see how fast or how good they are at the game. I think it’s really cool to see how you can connect with people from all over the world.”

The average streamer’s experience varies from that of the more popular members of the community. Sophomore Sophie Sawyer occasionally streams with a small audience.

“Honestly, it’s more like hanging out with friends than anything else. But I’m a really small streamer, so the atmosphere is incredibly different than, say, someone like Ninja” Sawyer said.

Whether their mainly students, or dedicated small streamers of any age, many wait patiently for their big break in hopes to create a blossoming following.

“I like that people of all ages are now trying to understand video games and streaming stuff, because it’s almost beautiful to see that even older people can put themselves out there on a GenZ dominated platform,” junior Victoria Flint said.

HALEY HEWITT, LMFT
THERAPIST FOR TEENS IN LAFAYETTE
(925) 297-5175

Among Us Takes Off With Students

The recent uprising of a popular video game affects Acalanes students

Saylen Cardoni and Sammy Lee | Staff Writers

Blueprint Graphic/Freschtta Warres

Esports and video games are part of everyday life for teens. The most recent trend, despite the fact that developers released it in 2018, is the now wildly popular video game “Among Us.”

“Among Us” creates a fun social environment for players in a game of strategy and stealth, which exercises your inner detective.

In “Among Us,” five to ten players set out on a map, with one or two players randomly selected to act as the imposter. The players not selected as impostors, also known as crewmates, perform tasks around the map in the form of minigames.

The goal of the game is for the imposters to kill the crewmates before they finish all their tasks or vote out the imposters. Someone can trigger a vote by finding a body and reporting it, or by calling an emergency meeting using the emergency button.

After the imposter kills a player, the player’s body is left lying on the ground. As other players run past a body they have the option to report it. Players can only talk when a vote is going on. A typical game takes five to ten minutes.

The simplicity of the game is a possible reason why “Among Us” is so popular.

“‘Among Us” is a perfect example that a game does not have to have amazing graphics or concepts to be popular.

“‘Among Us’ is a relatively simple two dimensional game that has a very enjoyable player experience,” sophomore Austin Bishop said.

Along with the pleasant elementary interface, the game is extremely accessible. Players can purchase it for five dollars on a computer and for free on a phone.

Although “Among Us” hit the market in 2018, it was not well-known until Aug. 2020. Its popularity increased due to the popular streaming platform, Twitch.

“I saw my favorite streamers, “Ninja” and “Myth” playing “Among Us” and streaming it. It looked like a lot of fun,” sophomore Andrew Sappal said.

Another possible factor for the game’s blowup is the COVID-19 school shutdown. The shutdown decreased socialization, but “Among Us” provides students with a new and exciting way to spend time with friends.

“I don’t think that it would be as popular [without the shutdown] due to it being a way to communicate and have fun with others,” sophomore James Cortez said.

“Among Us” stands out to some because of its interesting gameplay experience. One unique aspect to “Among Us” is the communication in the game. Unlike most games, “Among Us,” requires complete silence until a meeting.

“Because of the constant silence, I’m always wary of people. Whenever I see someone I’m automatically suspicious,” sophomore Jack Bayless said.

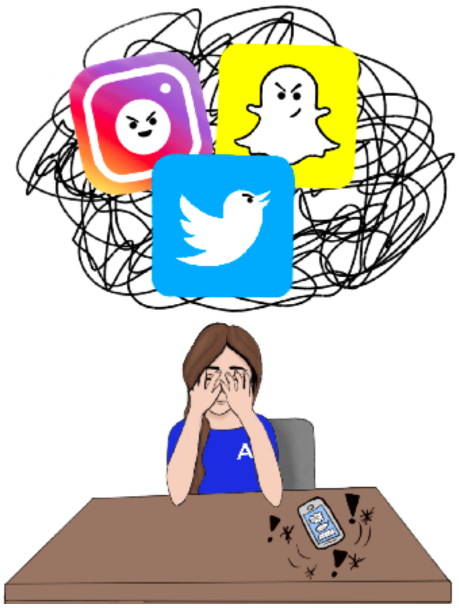
The game captures millions of players’ attention through its simple user experience, unique aspects, and its ability for creativity.

“I don’t even play the game often, but I still watch tons of YouTube videos of others playing it together because it makes really funny and enjoyable content,” junior Brooke Blacklidge said. “It’s really heartwarming to see that people can have something in common when they can’t really physically see each other, even if it’s just a video game.”

The Social Dilemma Depicts Scary Reality

Tech experts urge America to delete social media in Netflix Documentary

Julia Poole and Izzy Smith | Online Feature Editor and Staff Writer



Blueprint Graphic/Sabrina Agazzi

Although most students spend their free time "snapping" friends, finding pictures for their next Instagram post, or filming TikToks, experts warn that technology companies do not keep the public's best interest in mind.

In Netflix's new documentary-drama "The Social Dilemma," tech professionals reveal the scary truths behind social media platforms. Incorporating interviews with developers from Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Google, Pinterest, and other sites, the film reveals companies' shocking methods and motivations for extracting data from users.

Aza Raskin, former employee at Mozilla Labs, inventor of Infinite Scroll, and Co-Founder of the Center for Humane Technology, describes how these companies make money. Social media is "free" to its users, so the advertisers paying to show ads are the customers, and the user's attention is the product. Tristan Harris, a former design ethicist for Google, further explains how social media companies collect data, such as the amount of time a user looks at a particular photo.

Whichever company creates the most accurate method of predicting a user's interests "wins" by collecting the most ad revenue and user participation.

Acalanes is not immune to the addictive effects of social media; yet the majority of students believe that surveillance capitalism is outrageous.

"I really don't think that tech companies should have the power to collect data from social media because those are people's lives and feelings online and tech companies should be nowhere near involved with that," junior Caroline Crossland said.

Other students would like to see changes in the way companies use data, but believe it should not get banned entirely.

"I think tech companies should have the power to collect data because if they use this for good they could help stop cyberbullying or help the users have less screen time," junior Stella Bobrowsky said.

According to Harris, social media companies have three goals: engagement, growth, and advertising. Their ultimate focus is to increase their number of users and to keep them online as long as possible in order to sell ads.

Many Americans support regulations for the protection of social media users' privacy.

"These companies could be treated like a public utility such as electricity and water. Also, companies like Facebook or Google could be ordered to break up under AntiTrust laws. Historically that has happened in the US without major impact on the economy, and some would argue that it was healthy for the economy," AP Comparative Government teacher Joseph Schottland said, "Standard Oil was broken up. AT&T was broken up. Facebook, Google and Twitter could be broken up."

While companies, such as Google, collect data from every search, some argue that the privacy of users remains uncompromised.

"Google knows a lot about you but all this information is, first of all, anonymized so once it gets collected, it's fully anonymous, it's only a stream of texts that nobody knows. The data is never shared on an individual level, it's always aggregated at a micro-level," fashion brand Reclaim Founder and Google expert Zana Nanic said.

Other tech experts argue that American companies should follow the European Union's example with General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).

"[The GDPR] puts control in the consumer to understand how their data is being used but also to stop it and say 'I don't want you to have my data, so you have to delete it from your systems and not contact me," TechSoup expert Cheryl Porro said.

For most people, however, data mining is not their primary concern with social media. In fact, research shows that mental illness rates increased dramatically in the past eight years. A study from the Journal of Abnormal Psychology reveals that between 2009 and 2017, rates of depression among teens ages 14 to 17 increased by more than 60 percent. Similarly, suicide rates for girls aged 15 to 19 increased by 70 percent and for pre-teen girls 151 percent since 2000. With the introduction of social media in 2009, this evidence highlights the connection between mental illnesses and social media.

"There is a lot of toxicity on the internet and people feel more comfortable saying things that they wouldn't normally say in real life. Plus, a lot of toxic behaviors are promoted on the internet such as eating disorders and the glorification of mental health problems," senior Emily Ingram said.

Some students feel that social media posts are meant to display the best of a persons' life and make it appear as though everything is put-together.

"You don't see the imperfections over the screen and it is damaging to mental health, especially if you are growing up seeing only 'perfect people' on social media," senior Jasmine Toni said.

Other students believe people exaggerate social media's effect on mental health.

"I don't think social media contributes to mental health issues to the extent that most adults believe and Hollywood makes it seem," senior Charlotte Fellner said.

While many students acknowledge a strong correlation between social media and the increase in mental health issues, they also argue that social media can boost one's mood.

"I am a self-taught artist and crafter and without inspiration from Pinterest, I would not have some of the ideas I've turned into projects. The way that I use social media makes me feel good," senior Emilia Gutman said.

According to a report by Common Sense Media, teens in the US spend about nine hours using media for enjoyment per day. The study defined media as watching television shows, YouTube

Continued on 28

Mulan's (Lack of) Honor

Disney's failure to create culturally sensitive movie angers viewers

Lizzy Xie and Juliana Upp | Managing Editor and Staff Writer

To say the 2020 live-action "Mulan" disappointed audiences is an understatement. What was initially a prospect that audiences expressed excitement for, the film ended up provoking a myriad of criticism.

Embodying historical inaccuracies and political tensions rather than winning audiences' hearts, the movie caused frustration toward Disney's performative activism and lack of political empathy.

In the age of increased representation in Hollywood, many fans look forward to another movie that contributes to the diversification of mainstream media.

Although fans had high hopes, they soon realized the all-Asian cast merely covered the film's historical blunders. Unlike the 2018 movie, Crazy Rich Asians, which boasted not only an all-Asian cast, but a diverse production staff, "Mulan" disappointed the public with a largely white production crew.

When Disney released the movie on September 4, viewers expressed anger towards the company's performative diversity. Despite the film's aims to celebrate and honor Chinese culture and history, people found countless incidents where Disney misrepresented and inaccurately portrayed these aspects.

"It was very orientalist and not even done in a good way. It was very obviously a European fantasy story, superimposed on a world with Chinese aesthetics," author of an upcoming novel, Iron Widow, Xiran Jay Zhao said.

Zhao made a YouTube video detailing the many errors she recognized in the film. One such detail occurred when young Mulan's family fears others will call her a witch.

According to Zhao, witches do not exist in Chinese culture. Instead, in the place of what westerners perceive as witches, there are fox spirits.

Despite the numerous mistakes made in the movie, many students remained unaware of and unable to point them out while watching.

"I don't think [I noticed any,] but I could have missed something," freshmen Maddy Beeman said.

There are several possible reasons for these student incapabilities. AP Comparative Government and English teacher James Munoz theorized on this.

"I think that the lack of counterexamples in English and history classes can, in some part, be seen as responsible for that," Munoz said.

These inaccuracies carry damaging effects on the perception of Chinese culture. Continuously, the media exposes students to stereotypes, negatively shaping their perspectives on certain lifestyles.

"This is hugely problematic because when there is a characterization of a particular group of people, it may not be realized that it is perpetuating a negative stereotype," Munoz said.

Aside from historical and cultural inaccuracies, the movie also drew intense political scrutiny. One of the first issues emerged when the lead actress who played Mulan, Liu Yifei, openly voiced her support for police in response to pro-democracy protests in Hong Kong.

"If she does not tow the Communist Party Line, she will not have a career in China. She will then be forced to go to the west and make Chinese language movies, which she does not want to do," freshman Threads and AP Comparative Government teacher Joseph Schottland said. "That's the difference between living in an authoritarian country and living in the United States."

However, many on China's opposing side took offense to Yifei's statement.

"I'm all for freeing Hong Kong. It's a shame. I wanted to like the movie, but when there's stuff like this, I can't," sophomore Nathan Dunn said.

More recently, controversy surfaced surrounding the region in China, Xinjiang, where parts of the movie were filmed.

These days, the region is under heavy scrutiny due to the presence of the Chinese Communist Party's (CCP) crackdown on Uyghur Muslim culture and life there.

"Millions of them have been put into what really only can be described as concentration camps and detention camps...where they are brutally tortured and really forced to accept the teachings and positions of the Communist Party," Schottland said. "[This is] part of the CCP's policy of Hanification, or basically moving ethnic Han, or Chinese, into that area to dilute the population of the Uyghurs."

Disney's disregard for those enduring torture and oppression in this region sparked outrage from viewers.

"I think it just sends the message that Disney does not care about what's going on there," Chen said. "Obviously Disney is a massive corporation, they need to make money. But, at the same time, it's such a sensitive area, and it's a place where such inequalities and injustices are happening, maybe if it happened in a different area it would just be better overall."

Disney further pushed themselves into controversy when the ending credits specifically thanked the regional government of Xinjiang for allowing them to film there.

Despite the negative connotations around their open support for a government that actively represses the Uyghur Muslims, it educates people on the human rights violations occurring in the region.

"It's bringing a lot of attention to this region, so in one sense, even if it wasn't the intention of Disney, everyone is now paying attention, which I think is a very good thing," Munoz said.

Audiences not only expressed their criticisms, also revealing that the movie missed a chance to display a positive message.

"I feel like they could have done a lot with this movie to make it something that stands for freedom and equality but instead they just went the easy way," Dunn said.

Blueprint Graphic/Freschtta Warres

Quote of the Issue

"To love yourself right now, just as you are, is to give yourself heaven. Don't wait until you die. If you wait, you die now. If you love, you live now." - Alan Cohen

Kayli Harley | Online Editor-in-Chief

Click. The faces of people we may not even know appear in an endless chain of images and videos. We scroll through posts, open pictures, and with each click, we become more and more dissatisfied with ourselves. It's not the pictures, but rather the fact that we aren't looking at the people in them; we intensify our incompleteness through the perceived perfection of others.

Click. The bedroom light switches on and illuminates the reflection in the mirror. Our inner-critic emerges ready to do what it knows best: point out every imperfection until we wish the reflection wasn't ours, and then remind us that it has to be.

Click. The gears in our brain grind to find some sense of self-love amidst all the hatred we carry for our bodies, because we think that how closely we match a specific image of beauty determines our worth. We let our optimism suffer because doubt is the only thing we remember how to sustain.

In modern America, confidence runs in short supply. That is what makes it so important. Our imperfections constantly reflect back at us, which makes our greatest strength accepting the flawed person we see. It is not easy for us to love ourselves, but self-love is a precious gift worth the effort it takes to unwrap.

Practice self-compassion, create your own definition of worthiness, embrace your beauty, and put yourself first. Do not wait. Do not convince yourself that you are unworthy of the effort. It is easy to slip back into the grasp of negative thoughts, but we can't find love there. You are the only one who can control the love that you accept.

Courtesy Graphic/Anne Thiselton-Dyer

Social Dilemma

Continued from 26

videos, movies, playing video games, listening to music, and checking social media apps.

Most students at Acalanes, however, find that the majority of time spent on their phone is on social media. Many teens agree that the way social media companies design their apps to keep them scrolling is hurtful.

"I would change social media by setting stricter guidelines for what people can post and also add a mental health initiative to help stop people from becoming addicted," Bobrowski said.

Another issue that frustrates many Acalanes students is the spread of manipulative narratives and false information on social media platforms. In apps like Facebook, students often wrestle with whether news sources are fact or fiction.

"I think many lies are spread through social media. It creates a very hostile environment where extreme views are brought forth in almost a violent manner. Regardless of political or social views, the information shared can be highly embellished and fraught with fear," Gutman said.

Of course, technology and social media hold tremendous benefits as well. Increasingly apparent during COVID-19, social media helps connect people across the globe.

"The purpose of social media is a way to stay connected. For me, I have not lived in Lafayette my whole life so being able to stay updated with what's happening in my friends' lives that I can't see every day is important to me," senior Lindsay Campbell said.

Social media also allows students to develop passions and connect with people outside of their friend group.

"The internet has allowed me to learn a lot and find communities of people similar to me that I can interact with. It is very freeing and you can explore who you are," Ingram said.

Overall, the public largely debates issues regarding social media. Most people advocate for deconstructing the way social media was built.

"There are definitely good and bad parts of social media and we just need to learn how to use it so that we spread positivity and creativity instead of harmful and conformist views of individuals," Gutman said.

snacks w xie

You can pronounce my name 'Shey' to get the full effect of the title's jingle

Lizzy Xie | Managing Editor

Hi, hello! Welcome to the very first Snacks with Xie column. I'm Lizzy Xie, your host. Here, I sophisticatedly rant about the goodness of food, whether satisfying our stomachs or warming hearts. Settle down with your favorite food and drink and let's get snacking!

If you're anything like the foodie I am, quarantine remains extra difficult. None of us can go out to eat, whether it be your old haunts or somewhere completely new. Instead, we're stuck at home making our own meals.

This isn't necessarily a bad thing! Unless you get a bit ahead of yourself and try to follow that really complicated recipe from New York Times Cooking.

At the beginning of quarantine, losing the freedom to go out for food was not a struggle I viewed as impossible. I thought it would benefit me to make my own food and try new recipes.

This was much easier said than done, my friends.

Initially, making food was pleasant and relatively easy for me, amid the overall messy state of the world. I quickly satisfied my cravings for different foods and was happy with what I made. I enjoyed everything from baked goods to potstickers (yum.)

However, at the six-month checkpoint, I think I'm really starting to lose my mind a tad bit.

Just a tiny bit.

I really miss eating out.

You might think, "but Lizzy! There's takeout," exasperated at why this Lafayette child is absolutely losing it over food.

Yes, there is takeout.

But it just isn't the same as eating in the restaurant, you know?

My definition of "eating out" currently consists of going to a restaurant, ordering takeout, walking back to my car, and proceeding to precariously balance all my food and eat it.

Ok, yes, the image is funny to envision. There's me, this Asian kid, sitting in my car with my mother goose (she's my food buddy), surrounded by takeout boxes, trying not to drop any of my precious cuisine. But man, I miss eating inside a restaurant. It's the small things I miss.

In a non-creepy way, I miss people watching while sitting in a restaurant. You know, the whole, "oh, hey look at that guy trying to carry four cups of coffee. He looks like he's on the struggle bus," or the, "oh, look at that dog! Such a good dog. I'm so proud of them."

Besides people watching, I miss the connection you get from food when you share it with friends and family.

The food doesn't have to be a three-star Michelin rating. I believe it's who you share it with that makes you feel so warm and fuzzy inside. The experience of sharing food with the people you care about is not only a personal, touching experience, but is truly one of the happiest feelings for me.

We didn't appreciate this human connection over food enough until we lost it.

As we navigate these coming months, it's my hope that this food column of chaos will emulate the happiness you might miss from eating good food with the ones you cherish.

Blueprint Graphic/Lizzy Xie

layout by zoe edelman

REGISTER NOW!

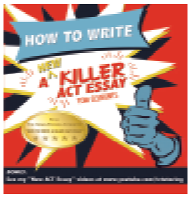
Chemistry Physics Math SAT/ACT

✓ Clear presentation of complex material
✓ Dynamic small-group learning experience
✓ Expert instruction for Miramonte, Campolindo and Acalanes students

AP Chemistry – Regular Chemistry
AP Physics – Regular Physics
Calculus – Pre-Calc – Algebra II

My track record stretches over 30 years and includes helping students gain admission to Harvard, Brown, MIT, Stanford, NYU, UCLA and Cal among dozens of others.

FIRST CLASS FREE



TOM CLEMENTS TUTORING

Tom Clements, B.A., M.S. – former lecturer, St. Mary's College
www.tctutoring.net / tctutoring@comcast.net
www.youtube.com/tctutoring
346 Rheem Blvd., Suite 110-B, Moraga
(925) 376-4704

For advertising in the August 2020 issue of *The Orinda News*
Please initial below and fax to 510-758-1437: Approved ____ See changes noted above: ____
* Please note prices above do not include any typesetting charges if they apply.

SAN FRANCISCO BAY.COFFEE
EST. 1979
A ROGERS FAMILY COMPANY

TikTok: Dances or Disaster?

An outflow of political manipulation and misinformation on TikTok leads to teens being influenced by unethical political values

Zoe Edelman | Graphics Manager

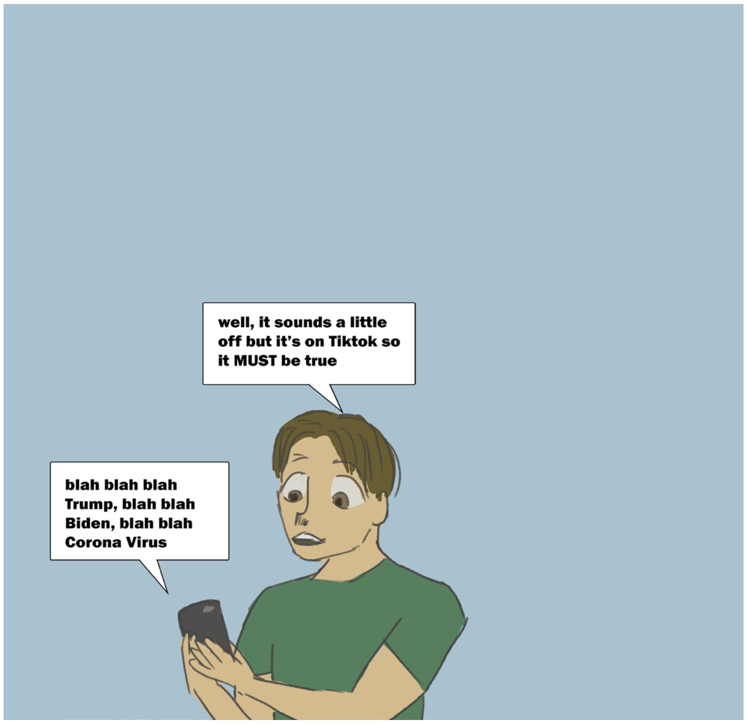
My TikTok feed is filled with teens protesting for Black Lives Matter, the impacts of coral bleaching in the oceans, the horrors of fast fashion- the list goes on. One glance at my feed could give anybody a fairly accurate look into my political beliefs. My feed has the general narrative that Generation Z is at the front line of a sociopolitical revolution.

The TikTok algorithm is designed to keep users engaged on the app for as long as possible by targeting users with videos they are interested in. When a user likes or comments on a video, the algorithm perceives it as a video the user enjoyed. This also applies to watch time; the longer a user watches something, the perception is that they enjoyed the content. Applying this data, TikTok will suggest more videos based on the perceived interests of the user.

The algorithm seems like a win-win as TikTok serves the user videos they like and the user gets to view content they enjoy. However, the algorithm can quickly become problematic because it seems like it has your best interest in mind.

TikTok has a snowball effect: more interaction with a certain type of content means more of that content appears on someone's feed. Niche content contributes to the political polarization on the app. TikTok has no compassion for my interests but its algorithm knows how to serve them to me. For example, let's use the Tulsa Rally incident.

Trump's Tulsa campaign rally was on June 20, 2020 and the campaign projected it to house around 19,000 attendees. The turnout was 6,200. The disconnect between the predicted and actual turnout can be attributed to TikTok users. Several videos went viral on the app, incentivizing viewers to reserve free rally tickets to fraud support for Trump's campaign.


well, it sounds a little off but it's on Tiktok so it MUST be true
blah blah blah Trump, blah blah Biden, blah blah Corona Virus

Blueprint Cartoon / Freschtta Warres

The result of the prank was a prospective "packed" rally extending to an overflow section at the venue. To any user not engaged with the TikTok initiated prank, it was quite a surprise to learn about the meager turnout and hear Trump attempt to stutter his way into an explanation as to why only a few thousand were present.

The TikTok algorithm recommended the Tulsa prank to me because it knows my viewing habits are similar to those of the demographic this video is targeting. There are plenty of terrifying repercussions from that type of persuasion.

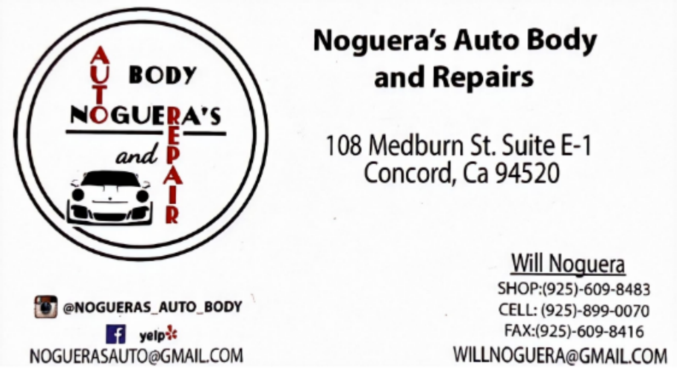
TikTok is changing the behavior of people. Of kids, really. Users are targeting the most malleable generation with videos that invoke political action with real world implications. Tulsa is just the beginning of this. While rally attendance is dangerous to Trump's ego, it is arguably not something vicious.

Due to TikTok's algorithm, it is easy to be influenced by false information and political campaigns. Using a platform deemed cool by Generation Z makes these videos appear harmless, maybe even made by teens themselves. It is easy to assume other users that look like you and appear to share your sensibilities, and therefore have your best interest in mind. The reality is that the teens who make these videos are being manipulated and manipulating others.

My fear is that TikTok is altering reality. Its addictive nature and manipulative algorithm is intoxicating and saturated with questionable intentions and a lot of political content. There is a reality within this app where flat earthers, anti-vaxxers, conspiracy theorists, and politicians have large platforms to influence a young audience. Becoming a part of some sort of political realm is fairly inevitable, and within every niche political bubble of TikTok lies misinformation and skewed ethical values.

Teens becoming targets to push problematic political agendas should be a concern for everyone. TikTok must prioritize the fight against misinformation on the app and focus on user protection for minors. The illusive marketing of this app is that it is a place for dances, filters, creators. But just like any other app, there are plenty of malicious users that lie within the usernames on the screen.

Stay engaged with the content coming across the for you page on TikTok. Take note of the politics, the people, and the content TikTok is pushing out and actively evaluate if that aligns with your beliefs. Or plan your own prank on the President, your choice.


Noguera's Auto Body and Repairs

108 Medburn St. Suite E-1
Concord, Ca 94520

Will Noguera
SHOP:(925)-609-8483
CELL: (925)-899-0070
FAX:(925)-609-8416
WILLNOGUERA@GMAIL.COM

@NOGUERAS_AUTO_BODY
yelp
NOGUERASAUTO@GMAIL.COM
AUTO BODY
NOGUERA'S
and
REPAIR

It’s Time to Change the Electoral College

The system has too many issues to continue in its current state

Keith Johnson | Head Videographer

In 2016 citizens witnessed an incredibly controversial twist of events: Hillary Clinton lost the presidency to Donald Trump, despite receiving almost 3 million more votes than him. This brought the validity of the Electoral College into question, as Trump managed to win by 77 electoral votes while clearly losing the popular vote.

In recent years, many people claim the Electoral College is undemocratic and outdated. With the upcoming 2020 election, it is important to recognize the flaws in this system and why it may be time to replace it.

The Electoral College was part of the founding of the United States. Article II Section 1 of the Constitution gives the guidelines for the Electoral College, explaining how each state gets a certain number of electors based on the number of Senators and Representatives the state has in Congress. Each state receives two Senators and the number of Representatives are based on the state’s population. Because of this system, citizens do not directly elect the president. Instead, almost all electors vote for the candidate that receives the most votes in their state.

In the present day, the Electoral College has 538 electors throughout the 50 states, giving an average of about 755,000 people per elector. However, the Electoral College is skewed towards less populated states.

For instance, the state of Wyoming has a population of only about 578,000 yet they receive the minimum of three electoral votes. Compare this to California, which has a population of over 39 million and 55 electoral votes, and it becomes obvious Wyoming has too much power when it comes to electing a president.

Wyomingites should not have far more power than Californians. Instead, all people should have the same amount of power when it comes to voting, regardless of where in the country they live.

When the Electoral College first began, only 2.5 million people lived in the United States and it was an accurate representation of how the people voted at the time. Now, the Electoral College decreases the value of votes from the approximately 55 percent of US citizens living in cities and largely populated states. Defenders of the Electoral College claim it ensures bigger states and cities do not control the election, but it does quite the opposite.

With increasingly narrow margins during presidential elections in recent years, the Electoral College is straying away from what the Founding Fathers originally intended of it. The system is no longer an accurate measure of peoples’ votes, so it should not still be the system used to elect a president.

The Electoral College has become less accurate in recent years. There have been five instances where the winner of the popular vote lost the presidency, two of which within the last 20 years.

In the 2000 and 2016 elections, Al Gore and Hillary Clinton lost the presidency, even though they had received more votes than their opponent.

The fact a candidate lost the election despite receiving two percent more of the votes than her opponent is absurd, and the Electoral College is to blame. Clinton won populated states such as California and New York but lost the election because of the unequal power in less populated states.

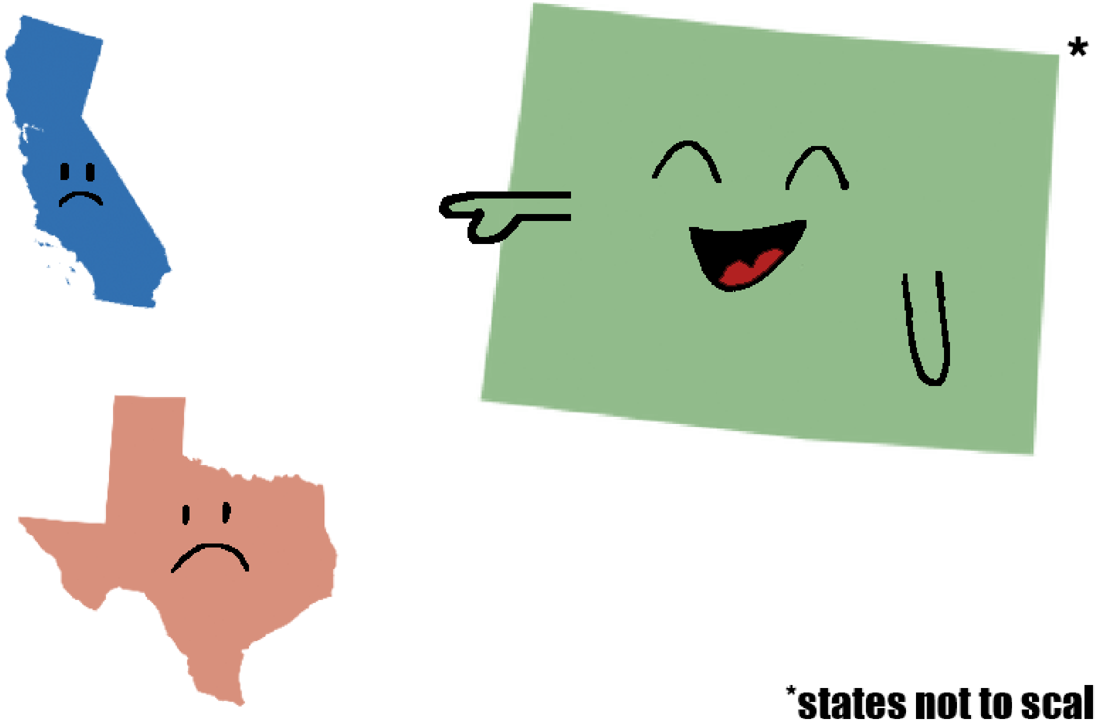
In addition, many states dominated by one political party are seen as less important during the presidential run because of the Electoral College. States like California and Texas are solid blue and red respectively, meaning both candidates know ahead of time whether they will most likely win or lose that state.

Assuming the outcome of a state diminishes the importance of that state’s voters and convinces some citizens not to use their power to vote. While it seems crazy people would not vote just because of what state they live in, statistics from the United States Elections Project show fewer people voted in non-swing states in the 2016 election.

The turnout rate of Louisiana, a strong Republican state, during the 2016 primary election was only 19 percent. In Hawaii, a strong blue state, the turnout was only 4.6 percent. On the contrary, both Wisconsin and New Hampshire, states that were very close races in the 2016 election, had voter turnouts of 49 percent and 52 percent respectively.

Voting in federal, state, and local elections is obviously important, yet many young voters choose not to vote due to their power to choose the president.

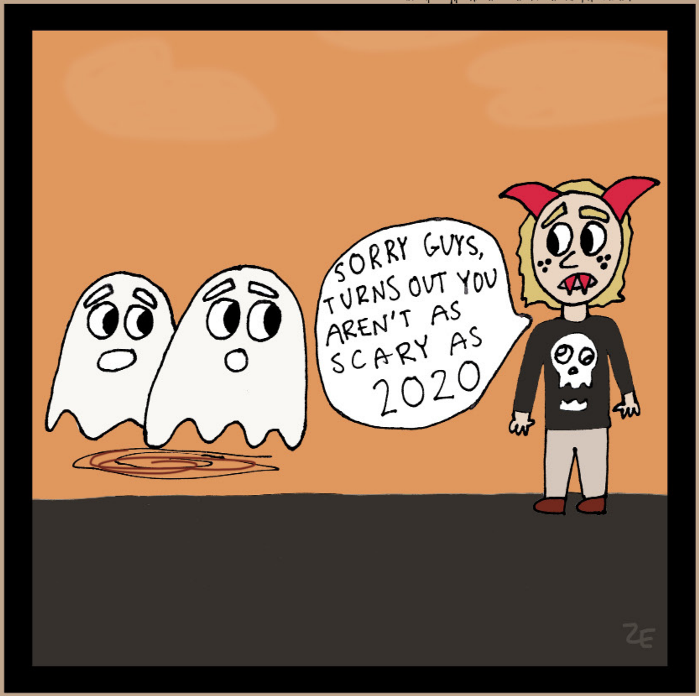
Continued on page 35



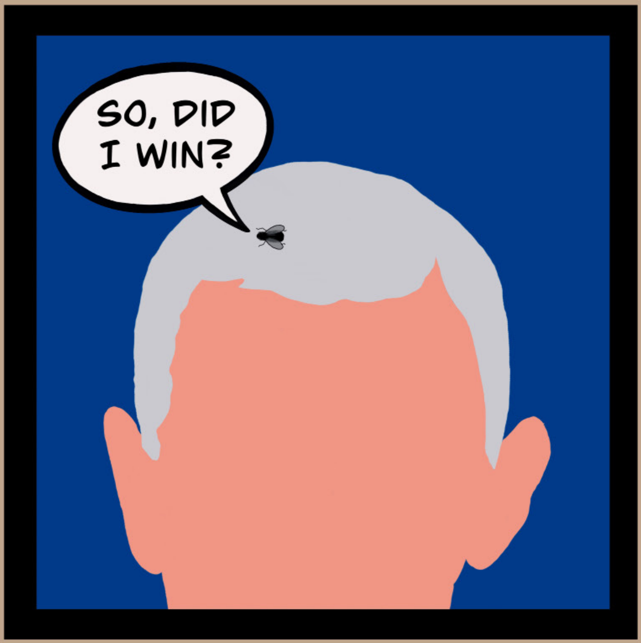
Blueprint Cartoon / Seth Kline

CARTOONS PAGE- OCTOBER

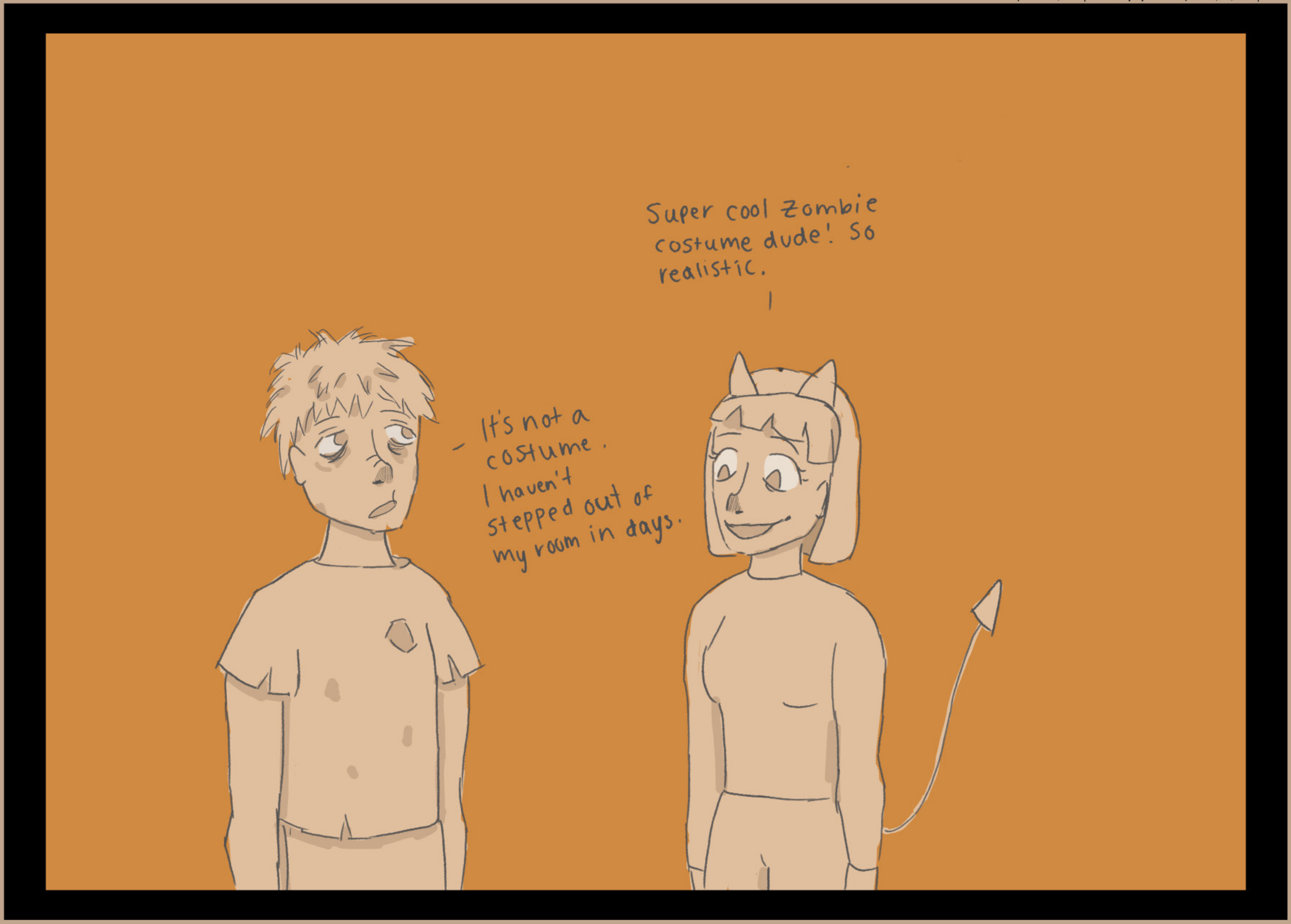
BY ZOE EDELMAN


SORRY GUYS, TURNS OUT YOU AREN'T AS SCARY AS 2020
ZE

BY SABRINA AGAZZI



BY FRESCHTTA WARRES


Super cool zombie costume dude! So realistic.
- It's not a costume. I haven't stepped out of my room in days.

How To Be a Good LGBTQ+ Ally

Why being an ally is so important to an often overlooked group

Emerson Brown | Opinion Editor

1. Understand why it is important to be an ally

LGBTQ+ people face daily struggles, both internally and externally, and grapple with rampant discrimination policies specifically targeting their well-being. Allies are necessary to help fight against this current normal. All people are human and deserve the same rights, and minorities have to fight for the same ones gifted to others.

2. Education

Understanding the basics of the LGBTQ+ terminology is essential to being a good ally. First, heterosexual and cisgender is considered "normal" in society. Heterosexual is defined as girls who like boys and boys who like girls, also known as straight. Cisgender is when sex and gender align. Sex is composed of genitalia, chromosomes, and hormones, whereas gender is an identity. LGBTQ+ stands for: lesbian - girls who like girls; gay - boys who like boys OR an umbrella term for people who deviate from the heterosexual norm; bisexual - people who like two or more genders; transgender - people whose sex differs from their gender; queer - an umbrella term that encompasses all who deviate from the heterosexual cisgender norm. Queer is formerly a slur and should not be used by others outside of the community.

3. Listen and accept

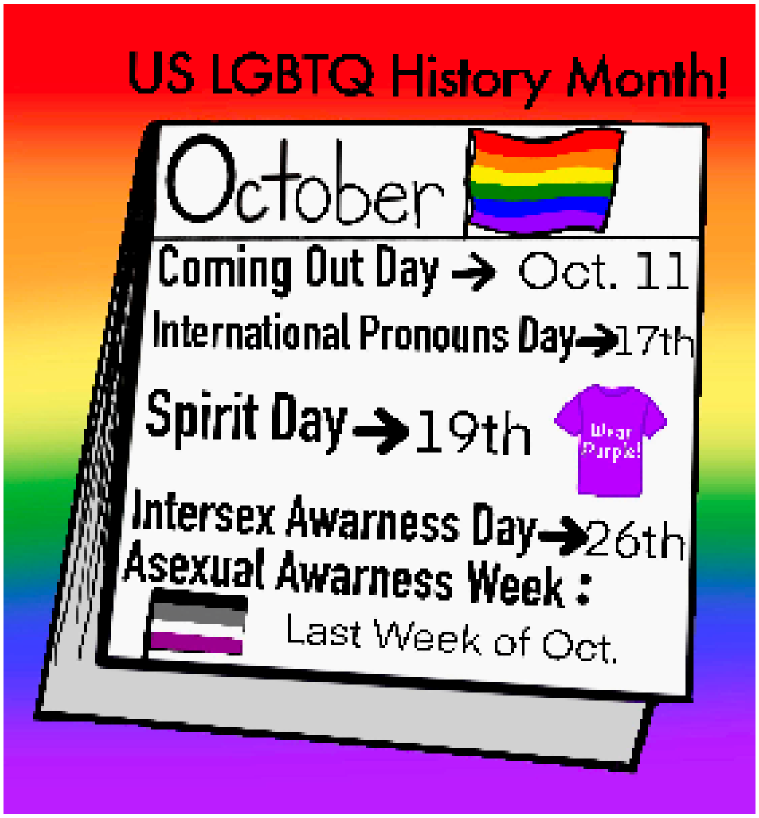
Understand that as an ally, you do not understand. You do not tolerate discrimination or microaggressions, you do not go through the struggle of realizing you deviate from the heterosexual cisgender norm, you do not face the decision of which bathroom to go in every day; you do not get it. And because you do not understand, listen to people who do and amplify their voices. Let them give you feedback and correct you if you say something wrong. Finally, when you listen, know you do not get to diminish the struggles LGBTQ+ people face daily, nor do you get to decide what is homophobic or transphobic.

4. Respect privacy

Within any relationship, privacy and boundaries are crucial, however, with gender and sexuality, confidentiality is essential. Coming out, or revealing your sexual or gender identity to someone, is terrifying, especially because there is always a risk people will not accept you. Disclosing someone else's identity without their permission is not only a gross abuse of trust, but it can put them in a compromising position where they may be at risk for discrimination, violence, or bullying. In short: respect privacy in all relationships, but especially in LGBTQ+ situations.

5. Make society more inclusive

Small gestures can make any space feel more inclusive, but they may be difficult to integrate at first. Over time, little things will become natural for you and can mean so much to those who benefit from them. A few examples include introducing your pronouns when you meet someone new and allowing others to do the same, or integrating gender-neutral language into your daily life (sibling, child, parent, partner, grandparent, etc) as not to alienate people outside the binary. If you are a creator, include LGBTQ+ representation. Any way that presents LGBTQ+ people as a common and integral part of society helps normalize their existence.



Blueprint Cartoon / Sabrina Agazzi

6. Stand up, even when it is uncomfortable

Call out anyone who makes an anti-gay comment or 'joke'. Though it is almost always uncomfortable to confront someone, being a bystander allows anti-LGBTQ+ sentiment to reside in the shadows. All discrimination is built on top of lower levels of discrimination, and small jokes pave the way for more severe forms of exclusion and discrimination. Additionally, do not use slurs such as the f-slur, d-slur, use gay as an insult, or say queer unless you identify as queer; all of these are previously offensive terms that are being reclaimed but a cisgender heterosexual cannot use them, akin to how white people cannot use the n-word.

7. Advocate

Do not be a performative ally; take action with substantial results. Refuse to support businesses with anti-LGBTQ+ agendas or policies, don't vote for homophobic or transphobic politicians, and sign petitions to advocate for justice. Allies can support the community financially as well through organizations such as the Human Rights Campaign, GLAAD, the Trevor Project, ACLU, and more. Though these actions may be inconvenient for you, they are way more inconvenient for the people that face discrimination daily.

8. Recognize Your Position

The 'A' in LGBTQIA does not stand for ally and they are not part of the community. Allies are integral to society and the advancement of civil rights, yet as important as they are, they are still allies.

The United States Needs to Prepare for a Robotic Disruption

An automated economy may have disastrous effects on the average worker

Noah Glosson | Head Section Editor

There is an issue that does not receive enough attention from the media or government. The economy is slowly recovering from the economic fallout from the coronavirus but humans may face an economic crisis like no other if we do not find any targeted solutions. It's a crisis that has nothing to do with a virus but rather massive labor displacement due to technology.

Starting in the 1980s, the technology industry boomed as thousands of inventors and entrepreneurs discovered new ways to make consumer products more efficiently. In current times, a massive technological boom from Silicon Valley is spreading across the globe and major companies continue to turn to technology as a more dependable source of labor.

Since more efficient robotic labor will decrease production costs, and therefore the cost to buy goods, consumers will use more and gross domestic product (GDP) will skyrocket. At the same time, thousands of workers will lose their jobs and suffer.

An industry at risk of robotic displacement is the manufacturing sector. With over 12 million workers, the manufacturing industry makes up 11 percent of this country's GDP, but according to the Federal Reserve Economic Data, United States manufacturing continues to decline at an alarming rate. While companies and factories relocating offshore certainly contribute to loss of employment, the main threat to the average middle-class factory worker is automated labor.

According to an economic study by the University of Maryland, automation shed 1.1 million manufacturing jobs from 1999-2018. These losses will only increase as the economy relies more on robotic labor.

The trucking and transportation sector could also face massive displacement because of autonomous vehicles. Although currently this sector employs over four million workers, those numbers could potentially plummet soon.

According to Goldman Sachs economic research, autonomous driving could replace up to 300,000 drivers per month by around 2030. Reports say truck drivers will suffer the most due to automation since they primarily drive on highways, a much easier route for autonomous vehicles than complex and unpredictable urban streets.

While automation will not displace the entire manufacturing industry, workers without a college degree are more susceptible to losing their job. With overall manufacturing employment plummeting, manufacturing employment among college-educated workers grew by 32 percent since 2000 according to the Information Technology and Innovation Foundation (ITIF).

Additional employment at risk due to automation includes food services, retail, office services, and research assistance. Many low-wage jobs are typically on the chopping block when it comes to automated losses.

While tuition cost skyrockets, our education system has not improved drastically over the past half-century. Automated labor will eradicate several low-wage jobs that don't require a college degree, which will only perpetuate the salary divide. As of right now, the United States labor force participation rate stands at 63 percent, the same as many developing countries in Latin America. To increase workforce participation, the United States must invest more in college education so our children can find jobs in an extremely competitive workforce.

With education, comes technological advancements. By 2050, artificial intelligence could become our doctors, our friends, and even our politicians. Some of the best high-wage jobs will exist in the artificial intelligence field and so we must understand the complexity of artificial intelligence and the importance of its labor.

Very few politicians are discussing the potential impacts of artificial intelligence and robotic labor and they must if we want to prepare for the future economy.

If anything, Generation Z may face the toughest challenges when it comes to working. With low-wage jobs diminishing, college graduates will soar ahead of non-college graduates, and jobs in construction, manufacturing, and analytical research will become increasingly competitive. The only hope we have is to find targeted solutions to the impending issue.

Electoral College

Continued from page 32

Abolishing the Electoral College may convince the next generation their vote matters no matter who they are or where they live.

True representation means everyone gets the same representation. Even our own Declaration of Independence famously says "all men are created equal." So it seems counterintuitive to make the votes of certain people more important than others.

Luckily, some states already began to alternate the way they give their electoral votes. Maine and Nebraska passed laws in 1972 and 1992 to split their electoral votes into smaller sections of the state.

Both states give two of their electoral votes to the winner of their popular vote, and divide the remaining few votes by their congressional districts. This means a candidate won't win all of the electoral votes in either state if they barely win the popular vote.

In addition, 16 states support the National Population Vote bill, a bill that will allow electors to vote for whoever wins the national popular vote instead of the popular vote in just their state. This will render the Electoral College useless and will take effect once states with 270 electors votes agree to it Currently, 16 states, which contain 196 electoral votes, are in support of the bill.

While abolishing the Electoral College would take years, or even decades, to accomplish, states choosing to follow in Maine and Nebraska's footsteps would give a more fair and accurate representation of the popular vote. While it would not be a perfect system, it would still be a step in the right direction.

On Mission Trips and Humanitarianism

Not the "life-saving" trip that gets advertised

Binti Sohn | Print Editor-In-Chief

Blueprint Cartoon/Binti Sohn

The topic of humanitarianism, or the promotion of human welfare, to many American high school students, constitutes a strong feeling of pity and a sense of urgency to "fix" the countries with photos of impoverished and starving children. In the dozen selfies and group photos with a bunch of smiling American faces seeming to improve foreign communities lies a certain savior complex that especially resides in a popular "humanitarian" effort: mission trips.

As a disclaimer, people who go on mission trips are not "bad" people -- rather it has come to my attention that the promotional image of "humanitarianism" is misleading. It's understandable why mission trips may seem to be the perfect "life-changing" experience; advertisements show volunteers helping to build homes, cleaning up litter, engaging with local children to improve foreign language skills, and seemingly saving the lives of impoverished people.

The experience may be life-changing, but often not for the better. American high school students, for one, typically have inadequate training in constructing houses. A lack of construction skills leads to a poorly insulated or faulty house structure; in countries without easy access to electricity, this can render the building almost useless for inhabitants. Additionally, a crudely built house, school, or church means nothing when social change is necessary.

Not only does a lack of skill play a factor, but the influx of these "volunteers" take away jobs from the local workforce. In impoverished communities, unemployment is typically high -- menial jobs, such as construction, offer locals a source of income high schoolers come and take away. It is unreasonable to think a mass group of foreign teenagers will be able to benefit a community when the existing workforce is excluded from jobs.

The emotional appeal of mission trips is exceptionally high. People tell stories of intense connections formed with little children from villages; how volunteers fed, bathed, and cared for these kids that seemingly have no parent to watch them. There is a degree of truth when volunteers say they care for a local child -- a bond being formed is not uncommon. The perspective of the volunteer, however, often disregards the perspective of the local child.

In the early stages of childhood, emotional attachments embody a large aspect of a kid's life that will follow them as they grow up. In the short-term, local children appear to be happy to interact with volunteers, forming close friendships. Kids, unlike teenagers who have had time to develop a degree of emotional maturity, will not fully understand why their intense connection suddenly left, never to see them or have close contact again. This is not the case, of course, for every mission trip friendship, but does exist for the kids who end up left alone to deal with sudden detachment.

Costs of a mission trip are important components to consider as well. Most mission trips can range from one to three thousand dollars or more; for example, a Haiti mission trip according to experiencemission.org is $769, on top of an average $500 airfare. Mission trip organizers often expect the volunteers to raise money to afford the trip, encouraging "nonprofit fundraisers" that mislead donators into believing their money is directly helping aid a third world country. Yet most of this money is funneled into travel costs and western hospitality corporations, not into the hands of locals. Expenses raised only go to fuel a student's vacation. Now there is nothing wrong with taking a vacation; what is wrong is the claim that a tourist-trip is a non-profit humanitarian effort.

Additionally, most mission trips involve countries that are already Christianized, so religious reasons are often not focal intents. This then raises a question: why are mission trips still so appealing to high school students?

To find a sense of self or gratefulness, one does not need to look outside of the U.S.. In the Bay Area alone there are dozens of ways to volunteer and help nearby low-income families and communities. Habitats for Humanity is a non-profit student-inclusive organization aimed at providing Bay Area residents with adequate housing. Further, homeless shelters and food banks are always willing to accept student aid in distributing food and resources. Those looking to work with underprivileged children can find after-school elementary or crisis center tutoring programs.

If one is passionate about levitating the socioeconomic conditions of another country, sponsoring a family or providing donations are some of the most direct options. I'd recommend one to reevaluate their intentions and reflect on some key questions: why is the mission trip country struggling? Is it because of their government? Or rather, foreign government intervention? Consider the social environment and culture: are there ways to aid social reform efforts? Are there resources to learn more about the country's politics?

All in all, a mission trip should not be for the sole purpose of a college essay centered on humanitarianism. Not only is it a misconception to believe that one is a "better person" after their trip, but mission trips mislabel the intent of humanitarian efforts. Do not get me wrong, mission trips still provide fun for those who go and allow students to see and experience new aspects of the world; but it's important to note that these describe a vacation, not a humane welfare solution.

Activism in Sports: The Unlikely Protestors Leading America

Sports activism is on the rise as athletes speak out over social media

Tom Bequette and Irene Meklin | Online Sports Editor and Staff Writer

By all accounts, Aug. 26, 2016, should have been an ordinary day. The Green Bay Packers were in town to play a preseason game against the 49ers, who were coming off a dismal 2-14 record the year before with low expectations for the upcoming season. But because of one man, that day became the catalyst of a wide-spread cultural phenomenon that has reshaped our country. It all started when Colin Kaepernick sat during the national anthem.

Throughout the 2016 National Football League (NFL) season, former San Francisco 49ers quarterback Colin Kaepernick kneeled during the national anthem to protest police brutality and racial injustice. Although he originally sat during the anthem, Kaepernick switched to kneeling after talking with former army ranger Green Beret who convinced him to kneel instead. The simple act of kneeling brought him a cavalcade of criticism and put a huge target on his back that effectively ended his professional football career. Even President Donald Trump weighed in, tweeting that "[NFL players who protest] maybe shouldn't be in this country."

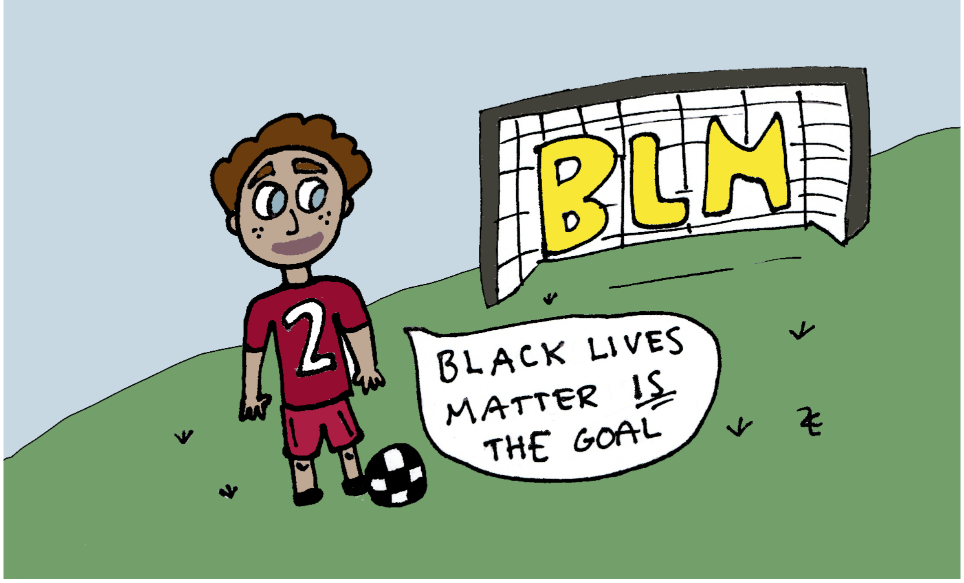
Generally, before Kaepernick's protest, sports and activism rarely combined on a major scale. Many saw, and still see sports as a break from the constant turmoil and headache of politics. Yet this is not always the case: there have been major protests within the sports arena like Muhammad Ali's or the famous shot of John Carlos and Tommie Smith holding up a black power salute on the podium of the 1968 Olympic Games. In 1961, basketball Hall of Famer and 11-time champion Bill Russell refused to play a game in Kentucky because a hotel in Lexington denied service to him and his African American teammates.

But more often than not, the potential retribution from leagues and the public leaves players hesitant to speak up. Even NBA legend Michael Jordan refused to endorse African American democratic candidate Harvey Gantt in his campaign for senator in North Carolina (Jordan's home state) on the grounds that "Republicans buy sneakers too."

Fast-forward to today and activism has become a huge part of the sports world, partly due to Kaepernick demonstrating to star athletes what they can achieve with their influence.

For instance, NBA superstar Lebron James has been very outspoken about the difficulties he faced growing up poor in Akron OH: "When you live in the projects in those circumstances, there's nothing you can do - you can't get away from it," Lebron told ET news. "But sports carried me away from being in a gang or being associated with drugs. Sports was my way out. Not everyone has that though."

Now he's using his fame and money to help make change happen as he established the Lebron James Family Institute and his very own I promise school to help at-risk youth in Akron. Lebron also pledged to send 2,300 kids to college on his dime.


BLM
2
BLACK LIVES MATTER IS THE GOAL

Blueprint Cartoon / Zoe Edelman

But it's not just Lebron; many athletes have joined the activism fray. NFL quarterback Dak Prescott recently spoke out about the challenges of mental health, NBA all-star Rudy Gobert raised awareness about the horrific Muslim concentration camps in China over twitter, and a whole host of players including NFL quarterback Carson Wentz advocate for the Black Lives Matter movement (BLM).

Additionally, group demonstrations have largely been introduced to sports activism over the last couple of years; on Aug. 28, nearly 100 NBA athletes and officials staged a walkout during the first round of the NBA playoffs to protest social injustice, specifically Jacob Blake's recent shooting in Kenosha, Wis. Teams from Major League Baseball (MLB) and the Women's National Basketball Association (WNBA) staged their own walkouts a day later, and the NFL Players Association has been very active and outspoken in support of the BLM movement with multiple teams protesting before their season openers by linking arms in unity.

So what changed? Why is sports activism becoming prominent and wide-spread now?

The most likely answer is that social media's platform and the internet's fast flow of information has provided popular athletes a place to voice their opinions and bring in the support that these movements need to grow; a platform that was simply not available previously.

"Social media activism is pretty common with athletes, especially since the Black Lives Matter movement," junior Ian Birmingham said. "They just have such a big audience that they almost have an obligation to use it for good."

For instance, NBA star Stephen Curry, who has always been a strong advocate and

Continued on 42

The Female Athlete Perspective

The struggles young girls endure in the sports world

Aysha Craig and Alexandra Ames | Copy Editor and Staff Writer

Whether individuals like to admit it or not, women are underrepresented, undervalued, and underpaid in sports. Take the United States women's national soccer team into account, which has won four World Cup titles and four Olympic gold medals. Compare this to the U.S. men's national team who have won the World Cup a whopping zero times -- it should only make sense that the women's team is paid more, yet their salaries are still only a fraction of the amount of their male counterparts.

Acalanes female athletes and coaches share their insight as to what it is like partaking in different sports where sexism is a prevalent issue, as well as the pressure society places on girls to have a certain body image.

The distinction between whether something is an act of sexism or not can be blurry at times, especially in high school sports. However, it is important to acknowledge that sexism, even if not bluntly clear, is a real issue that athletes face which continues to pile up over time. Regardless if these acts are intentional or not, female athletes are left to feel frustrated when they receive the worse end of an unequal deal time and time again.

"My Acalanes lacrosse team only has practice once a week for an hour, while the boy's lacrosse team has practice twice a week for an hour and a half," junior varsity (JV) lacrosse player and sophomore Kelsey Severson said, "during our season last year, we would always be kicked off and moved to the cabbage patch while the boy's team got to use the field."

Teenage girls frequently compare themselves to others in their school and club sports, whether it be to boys teams or other girls. Comparison proves to be a motive for athletes who want to improve their own abilities and maintain the same skills as those around them.

"I feel pressured by others to stay fit because in my mind if I look and feel fit then I will be the best athlete that I can be, even if that is not always true," varsity cross country captain and senior Nicole Frigon said.

IT'S LADY BUCKS! IT'S BASICALLY THE SAME AS MEN'S MONEY !!!
I'M NOT BUYING IT
10 USA
ZE

Blueprint Cartoon / Zoe Edelman

Although athletes maintain a healthy and capable body primarily to excel in their sport, there is also an underlying desire amongst teenage girls to look like others which prompts working out. Constant fixation on one's own body shape and size can be dangerous physically but also mentally.

"Teenage guys and girls tend to look at skinnier girls who have better bodies rather than the girls who are not as skinny, so there is an image in your head that you have to look a certain way to fit in and be accepted by people," Severson said.

The reality is that many girls feel that others define them based on what they look like. When asked if girls deal with body insecurities or comparison issues, the common answer is yes.

"I think it is common for girls to struggle with body image just because of all of the posts on social media," junior varsity basketball player and sophomore Nikki McCarthy said.

Girls are generally belittled in sports which is devastating to learn as a young aspiring athlete. Unequal payment and respect in the professional sports world prove to be deciding factors for young women who are hesitant to pursue their sport as a career.

"Profits from men's athletic participation, collegiately and professionally, dwarfs that of female sport generated revenue. I think it has to do mostly with money, but women are still trying to hurdle the imaginary notion that men are superior to women," Sports Medicine teacher Chris Clark said.

Women are just as successful as men in the professional world yet they are continuously knocked down and labeled as inferior. In high school sports a similar pattern emerges. However, Acalanes women's sports teams have built a reputation for their success and prosperity and therefore are promoted on campus as much as possible.

"In terms of success, the ultimate measure of course is winning. No team at Acalanes has succeeded to the degree of the girl's water polo program in the history of the school," women's varsity lacrosse head coach Bill Fraser said.

Along with dealing with internal struggles of body image, girls face off against boys sports teams to fight for equal representation.

"Sports can be frustrating because I feel like even if we do well and work hard, we are pushed aside by the boy's teams and are constantly compared to them," JV soccer player and junior Elise Flagg said.

G&C
Draperies

3391 MT. DIABLO BLVD SUITE - D
LAFAYETTE CA 94549

SHOP: (925) 284-8695
CELL: (925) 421-8565
clementenoguera1@gmail.com

Archer's Analysis: Impacts of the Return of Professional Sports

Sports aid in returning normalcy and stability into our everyday lives

Mason Archer | Sports Editor

As people search for an outlet or even a brief moment of relief from the ongoing craze of our current lives, everyone longs for one thing in particular: sports.

Amidst the numerous setbacks society is facing, from social unrest to the COVID-19 pandemic, sports may not seem at the forefront of our worries. However, in these dire times, sports will help reintroduce comfort and structure back into our lives.

Despite the positive benefits the continuation of professional sports offers, their return presents a slew of challenges. From frequent COVID-19 testing in major sports leagues, including the National Basketball Association (NBA), Major League Baseball (MLB), and the National Football League (NFL), to requiring any non-players present to be wearing masks, leagues aimed to combat the virus as best they could to resume the season.

Although each major sports league implemented rigorous safety measures for the continuation of the season, the resume of professional sports has not been perfect.

On one end of the spectrum, the MLB rolled out their regular season plan consisting of COVID testing every other day, non-active participants being seated in the stands, and non-playing personnel wearing masks at all times. Additionally, the MLB put limitations on each team's schedule limiting them to ten games against each of their divisional opponents and 20 games against the opposite corresponding geographical division.

Despite the league's precautionary efforts, a week after the MLB season resumed on July 23, the Miami Marlins experienced an outbreak totaling 18 positive COVID tests among the 30-man roster. Consequently, the complication raised concerns as to whether the season would continue or if games further postponement of games would occur.

The NFL presented similar concerns after a troubling outbreak occurred in the Tennessee Titans organization after only three weeks into the season. Beginning on Sep. 24, the organization has seen 23 positive COVID tests among players and personnel per CBS Sports. As a result, the NFL postponed the Titans contest against the Pittsburgh Steelers in week 4 as positive tests among members of the Titans organization continue to rise.

On the other hand, the NBA rolled out their bubble format taking place at Walt Disney World near Orlando, Florida. The NBA invited 22 teams to participate in the remainder of the season in Orlando that began on July 30. Participants allowed into the bubble consisted of only players and staff deemed essential, however, players on participating teams could opt out of playing.

Upon arrival to the bubble, two players tested positive for COVID-19, however, the NBA has yet to see any new positive tests in over two months as they near the end of the season.

Undoubtedly professional sports leagues expected positive COVID tests, however, both the NBA and MLB experienced their most concerning moments during the first few weeks of reopening, and the NFL appears to be following the same pattern.

Looking past the inevitable issues with resume professional sports play, the desire to return to play received tremendous support from the players. During these difficult times, resuming the season puts both players and staff at risk, nevertheless, it was the players' decision.

Subsequently, resuming professional sports restores certain key economic aspects. Professional sports rake in a massive amount of revenue from TV rights, sponsorships, ticket licenses, and ticket sales.

During the following couple of months, the suspension of many professional sports eliminated $371 million in wages and an expected $12 billion lost in revenue according to CBS Sports as of May.

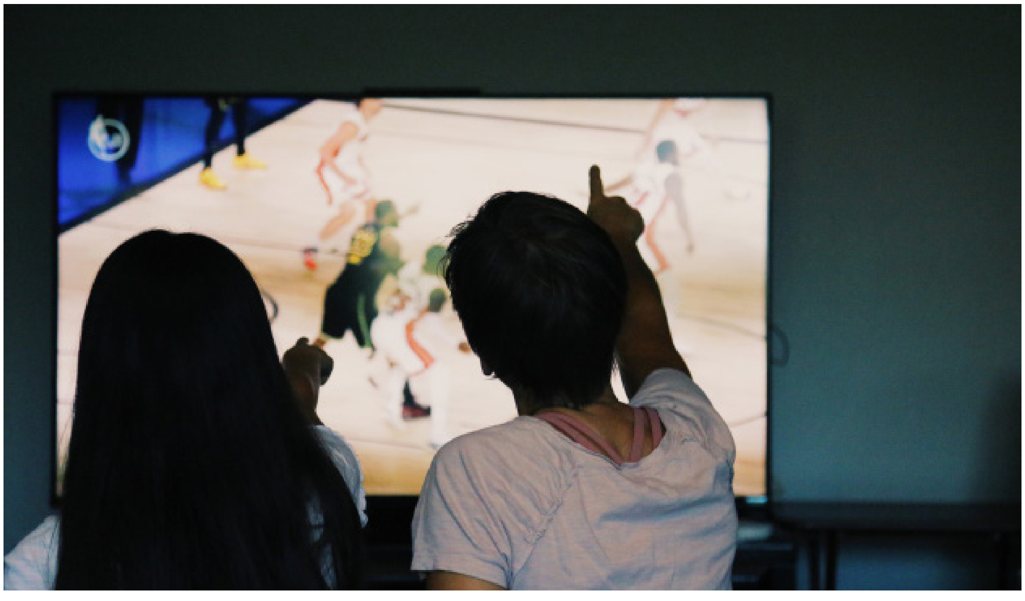
With unemployment rates skyrocketing during the pandemic, the return of professional sports not only restores jobs for players and staff in each major professional sports league but additionally restores jobs in many other parts of the sports industry including broadcasting networks, reporters, and analysts.

While the obvious economical impacts professional sports have in providing various jobs and revenue streams, the return of professional sports during the pandemic most prominently returns a sense of normalcy into our lives.

Professional sports help distract us from the continuous unrest and uncertainty present in our current lives. Players and sports fans alike are ready to return to a normal sporting environment seen through the partial reopening of NFL stadiums.

At the beginning of the season, several NFL teams elected to allow spectators to attend

Continued on 42

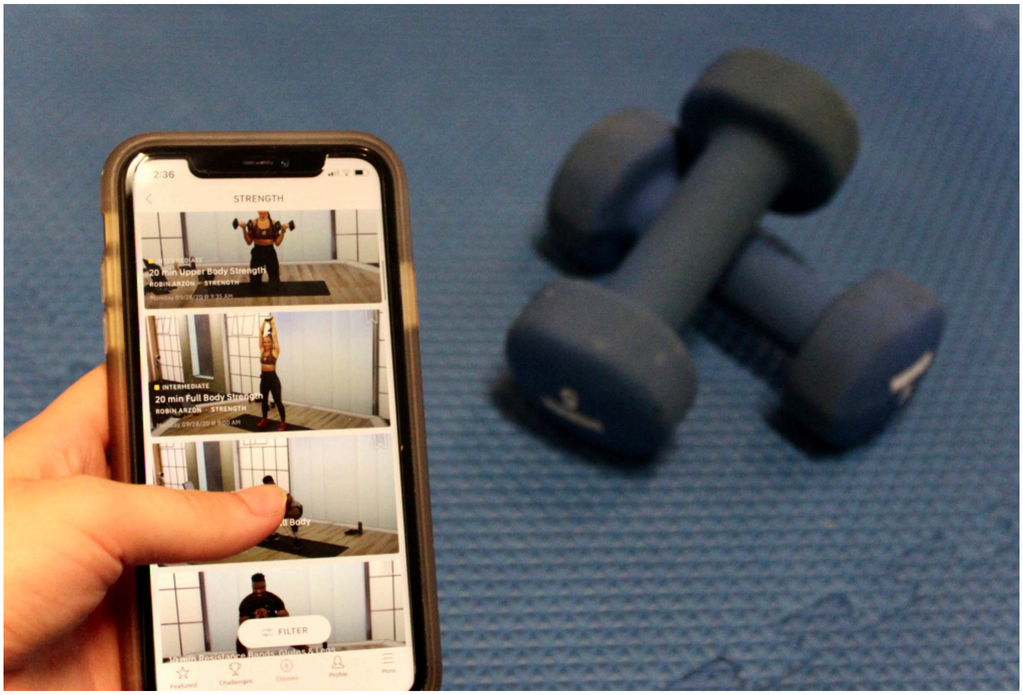


Blueprint Photo / Lue Van Handel

Fitness Apps and Programs Provide At-Home Workouts for Students

Apps and programs that focus on exercise make a great service for students during the COVID-19 pandemic

Jacque Peacock and Helen O'Neal | Staff Writers



Blueprint Photo / Mara Korzeniowska

Fitness apps and programs recently became key additions to daily home agendas as students desperately search for ways to exert their pent up energy indoors.

With the closure of gyms and workout facilities, students turn to alternative ways of keeping themselves active at home.

Acalanes students began using fitness apps and online fitness programs together over Zoom or alone to stay active during the COVID-19 pandemic.

"I think it's extremely important that not just students but everybody should be trying to find some level of activity, whatever version that is, and whatever form that takes," physical education and Sports Medicine teacher Chris Clark said.

Throughout the pandemic, fitness apps on smartphones emerged as a popular substitute for gyms and sports as students have a responsibility to help decrease the potential spread of the virus. Athletes and non-athletes alike use a variety of fitness apps from health trackers to workout plans.

"I play soccer [so] I started using [the Nike Run Club] app because I wanted to keep up with conditioning and stamina during my time away from regular practices and games because of corona," sophomore Addie Bailey said.

Social media played a big role in helping to promote online fitness programs with daily youtube videos and structured plans amid the pandemic. Chloe Ting, an Australian fitness YouTuber, posts free fitness videos on YouTube. Ting highlights High-Intensity Interval Training (HIIT) workouts and a two-week Shred Challenge on her website. They have been incredibly popular among people of all ages.

"I started the Chloe Ting [workout program] this year because she became very popular and I wanted to see what all the hype was about. I had seen a lot of people rave about her on social media, especially TikTok," sophomore Alyssa Fong said.

Exercise apps provide many benefits and conveniences as users can easily access these fitness apps right from their smartphones. Additionally, they serve as an alternative to regular sports practices or exercises that COVID-19 precautions do not warrant.

"I [recommend] both the Chloe Ting [workouts and] the Peloton app to anyone trying to stay active because it's super easy to just do at your house and on your own schedule," junior Elise Flagg said.

Exercise apps make it easy to sync activity recorded on fitness watches to a smartphone application.

"The Apple Health or Activity App is easy to use, the interface on the Apple Watch is pretty simple. It tells you what you need to know and the best thing is that it's integrated into the iPhone," sophomore Hanniel Dunn said.

Fitness apps and programs also provide ways for friends and family to spend time together, whether it be virtual or in person.

"At the start of the shelter-in-place orders, I started to work out with my brother and dad which was also very nice especially because we were home all day. I worked out with a few of my friends over zoom and facetime. I definitely don't think I would still be working out as consistently if it wasn't for the encouragement and support from my friends. It's been so rewarding to see us all improve mentally and physically," sophomore Mary Laska said.

Sports coaches have also been considering the use of fitness apps and programs for their athletes.

"If we get to November or December and are still not able to practice fully we will develop an online program to prep for our season, which starts in mid-February," varsity women's soccer head coach Nick Barbarino said.

Exercise apps and programs come with many benefits, but they fall short in certain areas as well. They can become repetitive and students may find themselves less and less motivated since they know what to expect.

However, students tapped into their problem-solving skills to keep exercise enjoyable.

"What I don't love so much is the music choice, after a while it gets pretty repetitive so it makes it fun to play your own music," sophomore Alyssa Fong said.

Despite the easy access to a multitude of fitness programs and plans, students should

Continued on 42

The New Way to Play the Game

Fantasy Football keeps fans engaged in the NFL season

Miller Smith and Kyle Bielawski | Staff Writers

With all high school fall sports seasons suspended until the winter, the National Football League (NFL) fantasy football has experienced immense growth in popularity, totaling over 60 million American users, according to the Washington Post.

During the NFL season, many Acalanes students spend their free time, especially on Sundays, watching the NFL while tracking their team's progress in the highly intensive game of fantasy football.

Participants play fantasy football in leagues ranging from four to sixteen teams. Each participant drafts a roster of sixteen players filling the various positions including quarterback, running back, wide receiver, tight end, defense or special teams, and kicker.

Each week participants set their lineup aiming to select the highest scoring roster giving them the best chance at beating their opponent. Teams can obtain fantasy points when their players score touchdowns, earn rushing and receiving yards, and catch passes.

Additionally, league managers can choose a Point Per Reception (PPR) or non-PPR point system. In PPR leagues players earn additional points for each reception on top of points earned for receiving yards whereas in non-PPR leagues players only earn points for receiving yards.

Many leagues argue over their scoring based systems but PPR seems to be a favorite in many cases.

"We play PPR because it's more entertaining, it levels out the playing field meaning some receivers who catch more passes but get fewer yards are even with the ones who catch fewer passes and get more yards," junior Anthony Ortale said.

Near the end of the NFL regular season fantasy football enters the playoffs. The top teams from each division in the league compete to win the bracket-style playoffs and sometimes bring home cash prizes, while the last place victim may not get so lucky.

"In my league you need to pay thirty dollars to enter and if you [come in last place] then you have to do a punishment chosen by the other league members. If you win you get 300 dollars," freshman Gavin Bender said.

Fantasy football is more than just watching football and accumulating points, it's a way for friends, co-workers, and family members to share their interests, talk about their players, and stay connected with one another.

"I enjoy it. I like learning about and becoming knowledgeable about players and teams. It is a positive outlet for me during these times," history teacher Lyenne Denny said. "I especially enjoy the camaraderie I have with those that play and look forward to our weekly matchups. It also gives me something else to talk about with my son as we engage in our weekly discussions about our teams."

COLLEGE CONNECTIONS
"Connecting students with their futures"
Sally E. Mehaffey
M.S., Counseling
1280 Boulevard Way, #213
Walnut Creek, CA 94595
925-367-6369
Sallymeh@gmail.com
www.collegeconnectionsca.com

In hopes of having Sunday to dedicate to watching football, many Acalanes students try to complete their homework in the days prior rather than impeding on their football-filled Sundays.

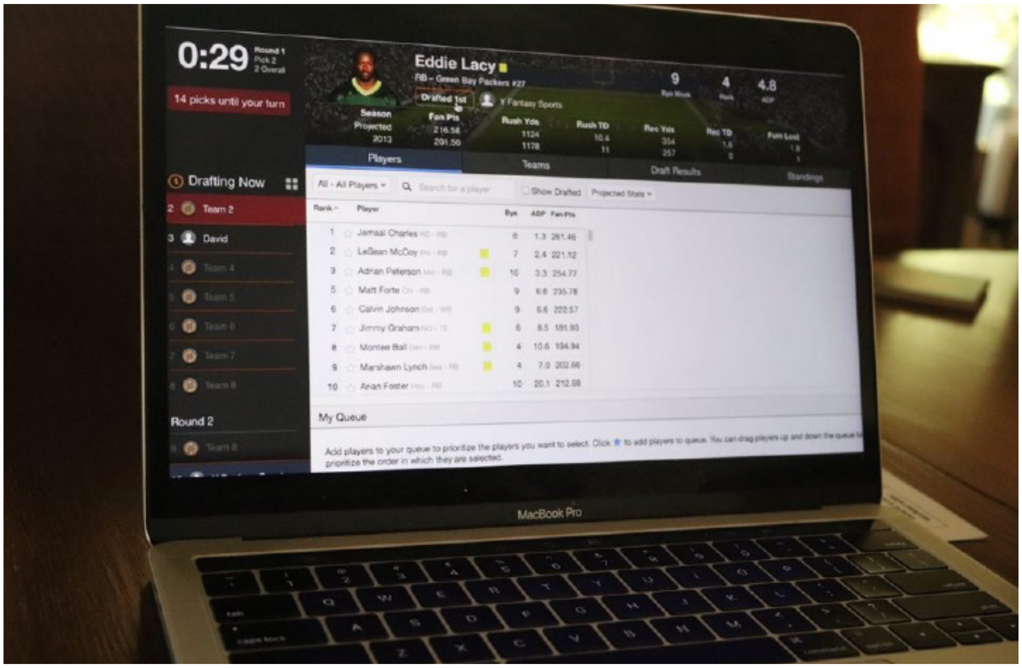
"I do my homework on Saturday because football is important to me, and I love to see my fantasy players live on Sunday," sophomore Nathan Bennett said.

RedZone, a channel run by the NFL Network, is a new extensive way for fantasy players and football fans to enjoy their Sundays. This channel provides every touchdown scored throughout the league and sometimes shows up to 8 different games at once. These unique characteristics make RedZone an unbeatable way to enjoy fantasy football and the NFL itself.

"I watch RedZone because you get updates for every game that is going on and for your fantasy players," senior Brady Huchingson said.

Fantasy football is not about the money or bragging rights, it is played for the love of drafting teams, the love of watching your players play, the love of talking and playing with your friends, the love of competition, and most importantly for the love of the game of football.

"I love to play fantasy football because it's a fun way to manage my team and watch the players you draft compete in the pros. It's also fun to compete with friends and makes the NFL and Sundays a lot more enjoyable," sophomore Nathan Kim said.



Blueprint Photo / Anna Yiannikos

Activism in Sports

Continued from 37

political activist, has over 32 million followers on Instagram at the time of this writing. Through major audiences like his, players have been able to get their opinions and important information out to the public at lightning-fast rates which give power to their ideas. Compare this to Bill Russell's boycott which took place in 1961 when the news mostly traveled through newspapers or television, and it's no wonder why his protest didn't expand beyond himself.

These protests stand out from other forms of activism as great ways to reach people across the nation, and at times the world, who may not be the most politically active citizens. Especially in an age when there is a great distrust of the media, having popular athletes speak out can shed light on serious problems.

While this platform has granted athletes the chance to raise awareness for important issues and ideas, it also provides players with a place to voice some of their more harmful ones. NBA star Kyrie Irving has been very vocal about his flat-earth belief over social media and NFL wide receiver Desean Jackson posted an anti-semitic tweet over the summer, both of them drawing controversy.

But while there's certainly a risk to giving athletes so much power and influence in our society, the benefits of America's new sports activism landscape, like raising awareness and money for a variety of social issues such as mental health and civil rights, are too substantial to ignore.

"There's definitely a big up and downside to it," junior Ryan Allen said. "When you create this big of a platform, it's going to be a mixed bag. But I think the fact that we created a place for people to talk about politics and other important issues is always a good thing."

Archer's Analysis

Continued from 39

games at a limited capacity including the Houston Texans, Jacksonville Jaguars, Dallas Cowboys, Cincinnati Bengals, and more. At a limited capacity, fans can enter the stadium and sit socially distant as they support their teams.

Currently, allowing fans in stadiums is primarily dependent on state and county guidelines, however, teams that have opened up their stadiums for spectators see increasing support as fans wish to return to in-person athletics.

The growing support to return to a safe in-person sporting environment represents the growing desire to reestablish normal pre-COVID activities into our everyday lives.

No professional sports leagues cannot be perfect and while some may be hesitant on the return of professional sports, there will never be a perfect time. The return of sports goes beyond the initial desire of watching professional athletes compete, it highlights the need for normalcy and aids in reestablishing unity in our country.

Fitness Apps

Continued from 40

check the credibility and reputability before downloading a fitness app or participating in a program. Uncertified fitness instructors can hurt participants by not demonstrating proper exercise movements.

"My only concern would be for all of the novices out there that don't have a background in certain movement patterns and they might jump into a workout routine that maybe has some advanced movements that they may not be prepared for or know how to accomplish safely," Clark said.

Even though these concerns and potential dangers arise, students found fitness apps and programs to mostly provide a great outlet to rid themselves of their bottled-up energy. Students' efforts to consistently workout during these times of crisis have great positive effects on them both physically and mentally.

"We know that there's plenty of evidence that links improvement in mood and thought processes when people exercise. We're moving the oxygen through our system, and our bodies really appreciate that," Clark said.

Fitness apps and programs continue to attract many and offer an energy release and a reason to get away from screens when students follow them safely and correctly.

"These programs are especially useful because right now you can't go to the gym," junior Elise Flagg said. "They're quick, easy, and a great way to stay active."

COMPASS

Experience matters more today than ever before.

We are proud to be Lafayette's #1 Real Estate Team Since 2008.

Work with us. Win with us.

DANA GREEN TEAM

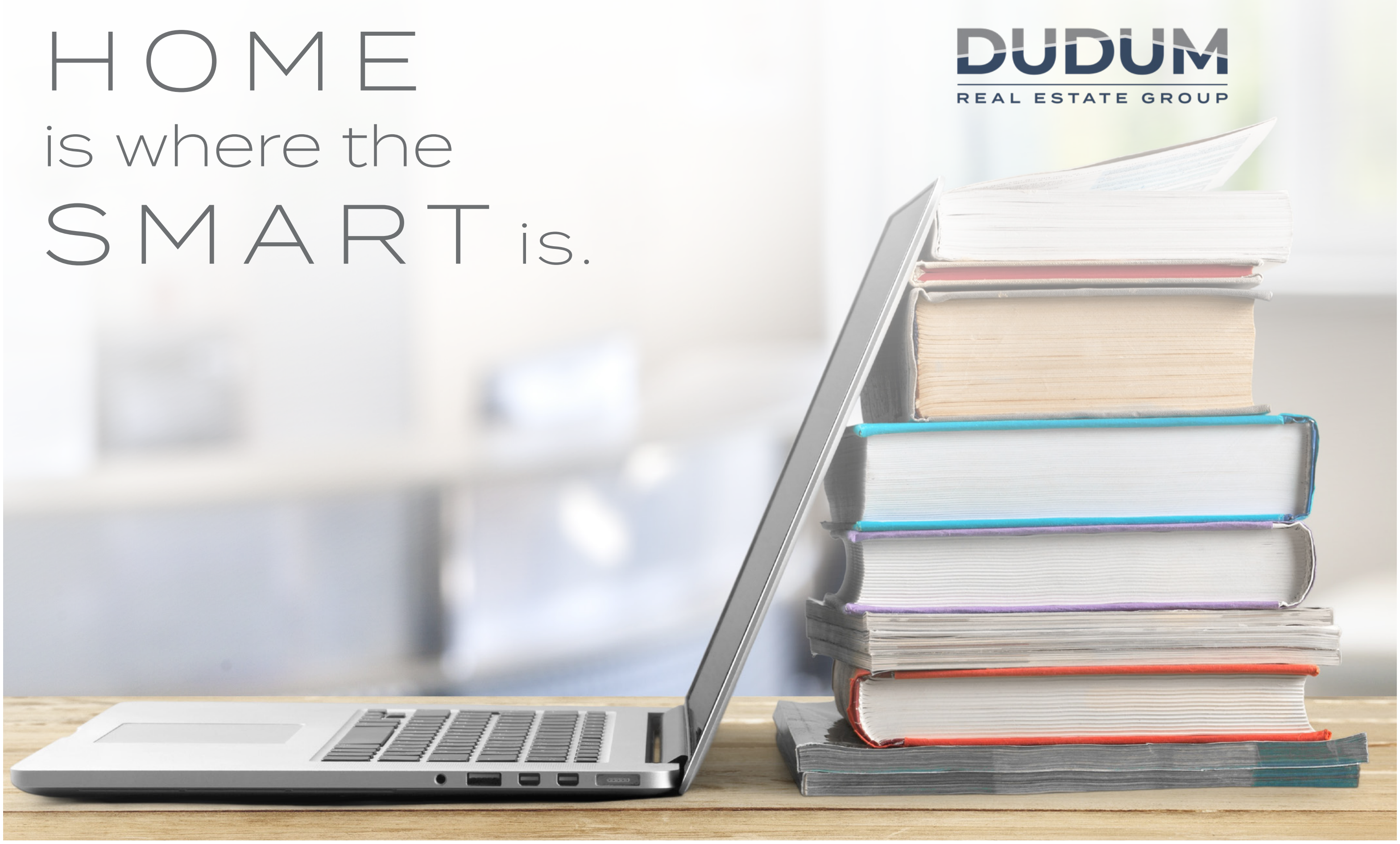
925.339.1918 | DanaGreenTeam.com | DRE 01482454

[illegible]

The $admoney Record$ takeover.

featuring the likes of: Becker Ibrahim , Eli Holland, Jack Hughes
Prince Chxrless , T.Y.G and !ian beats

@sadmoneyrecords_ @beckeribrahim_ @eli_s_holland @hugheswiththenewshoes
@chxrles_12.0 @ty_grebin @young_cashregie0408



There's no doubt about it—this school year will be one for the books (and laptops...and video conferences!) Please know we're sending supportive thoughts to the families and educators who are navigating through this new way of learning and teaching. You've got this!

If all of these big changes have led to a shift in your housing needs, give us a call. Despite the pandemic, the Lamorinda market is strong, interest rates are at historic lows, and it's a great time to buy or sell!

LISA TICHENOR
REALTOR®
925.285.1093
lisa@lisatichenor.com
DRE 01478540

JULIE DEL SANTO
Broker/Owner
925.818.5500
julie@dudum.com
DRE 01290985

DUDUM REAL ESTATE GROUP

LAMORINDA · WALNUT CREEK · DANVILLE · BRENTWOOD · SIERRA TAHOE · DUDUM.COM

©2020 Dudum Real Estate Group has not independently verified the information contained herein and therefore, assumes no legal responsibility for its accuracy. Consumer should investigate any matters or items disclosed, identified or about which they have concerns to their own satisfaction. If your home is currently listed, please disregard this notice as it is not my intention to solicit other brokers' listings. DRE Lic. 01882902

TRAVERSO TREE SERVICE

4080 CABRILHO DR, MARTINEZ, CA 94553

Sunday Closed
Monday 8AM–4:30PM
Tuesday 8AM–4:30PM
Wednesday 8AM–4:30PM
Thursday 8AM–4:30PM
Friday 8AM–4:30PM
Saturday Closed

(925) 930-7901

Kindness Rules!

Treat people how you'd like to be treated.
Say I love you. ♥ Write loving notes.
♥ Forgive. Give. Respect everyone.
Don't hurt others on the inside – or outside.
Say please and thank you + mean it. ♥
Hug. Listen. Be nice. Say good morning.
Don't assume. Apologize. Share. Lend.
Smile. Encourage. Inspire. Tell the truth.
♥ Let everyone play. Play fair. Hold doors.
Do all the good you can in all the ways you can.

www.kindnessu.com

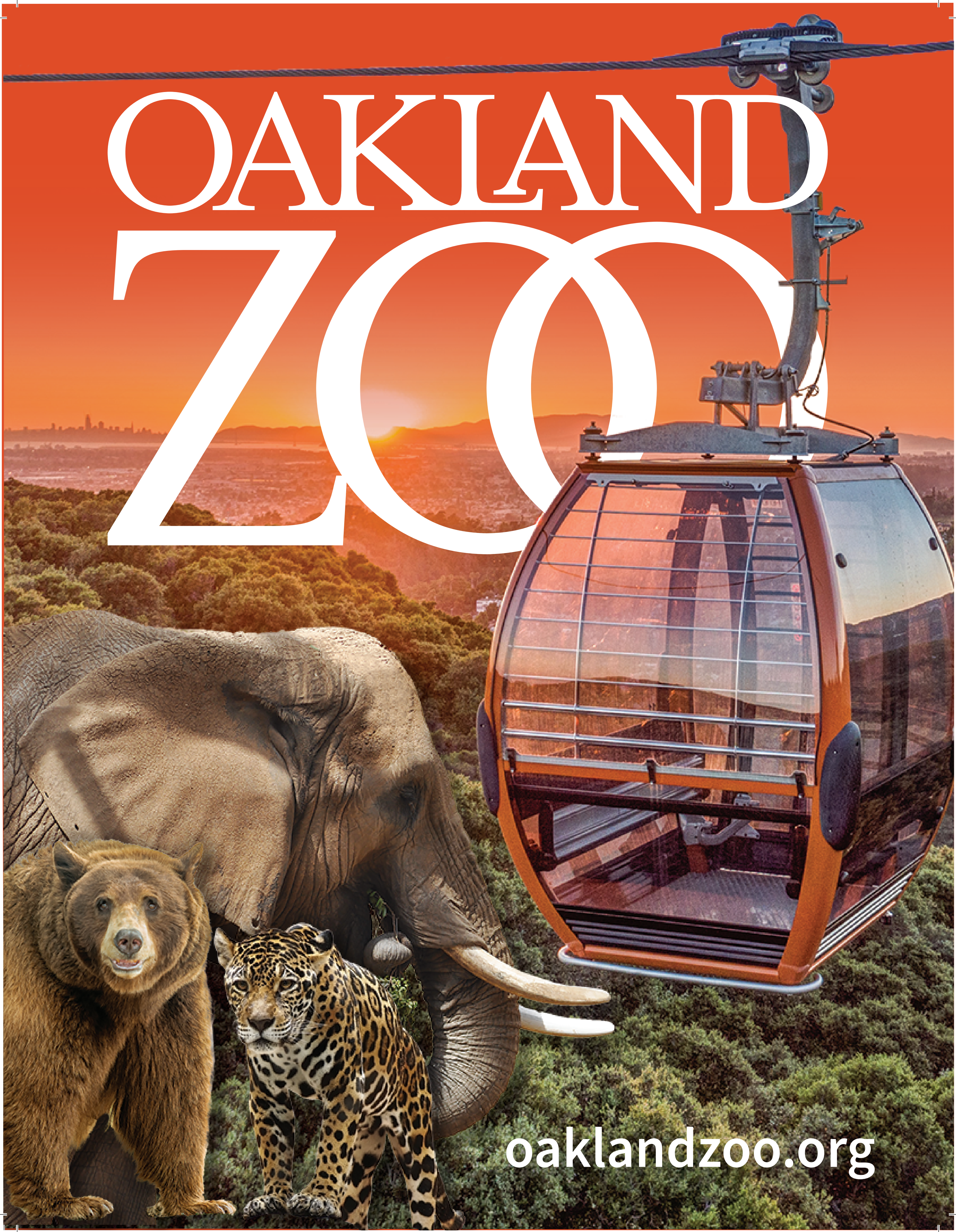
> **“Aimee is a huge inspiration. I highly recommend her philosophy to anyone who wants to make a change in their overall health.”**
>
> –Lamorinda mom

evolve
NUTRITION + WELLNESS

Aimee Ames, FNTP
Evolve Nutrition and Wellness

Book a FREE 45 minute call!

www.evolvenutritionandwellness.com
925.434.5005
aimee@evolvenutritionandwellness.com
@evolvenutritionandwellness


OAKLAND
ZOO
oaklandzoo.org

wish

gifts * home * baby * accessories

Sasha Varni
Susie Shirokow
wishwalnutcreek@gmail.com
www.wishwalnutcreek.com

@wishwalnutcreek
2333 Boulevard Circle
Walnut Creek, CA 94595
925.322.7109 - Call or Text

Individually Unique.
Collectively Complete.

BRYDON & IVES
REAL ESTATE TEAM

Kristi Ives
925.788.8345
DRE 01367466
kristi@brydonivesteam.com
brydonivesteam.com

The Brydon & Ives Team has not or will not verify or investigate the information or documents supplied by third parties.

COMPASS

German
Auto Service

**SERVICE & REPAIR
ON ALL GERMAN CARS**
MERCEDES, AUDI, PORSCHE,
BMW, VW, ECT.

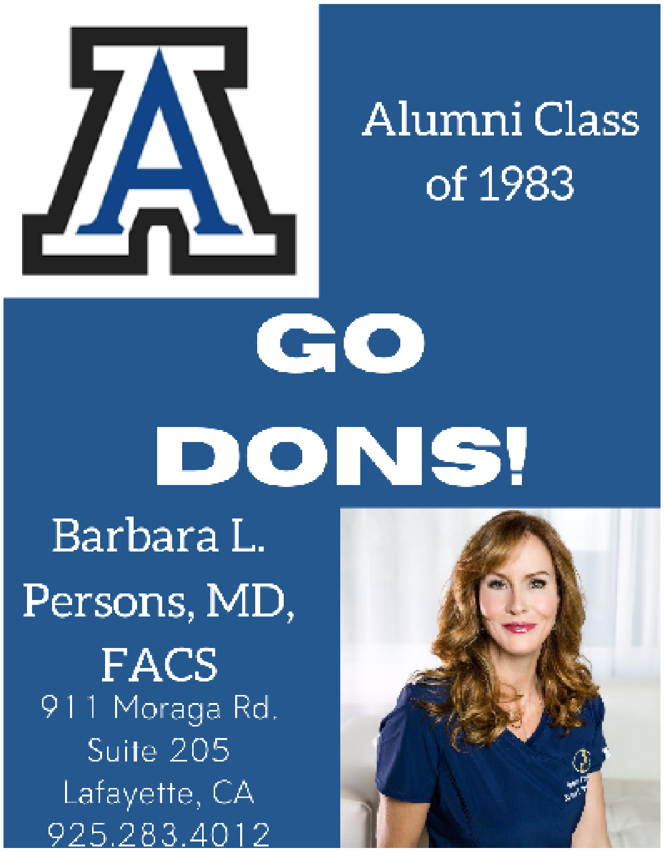
www.germanautoservices.net
Mon-Fri 8:00am-5:00pm

CHRISTOPHER BOEHLER
510-521-0651

1719 PARK STREET
ALAMEDA, CA 94501

Douglas Parking LLC
1721 Webster Street
Oakland, CA 94612
(510) 444-7412
www.douglasparking.com

CALIFORNIA COLORADO LOUISIANA NEVADA OREGON UTAH WEST VIRGINIA



Alumni Class
of 1983

GO
DONS!

Barbara L.
Persons, MD,
FACS
911 Moraga Rd.
Suite 205
Lafayette, CA
925.283.4012

FINEGOLD
COMMERCIAL REAL ESTATE

Scott C. Finegold
CEO & President
Corporate Real Estate Advisor

San Francisco 415.683.3209
Silicon Valley 650.461.9100
East/North Bay 925.962.9900

ScottF@FinegoldCRE.com Broker Lic. 01735546

BERKELEY Smile STUDIO

Daniela Truta, DDS
510-848-5618
3010 Colby St #217
Berkeley, CA 94705

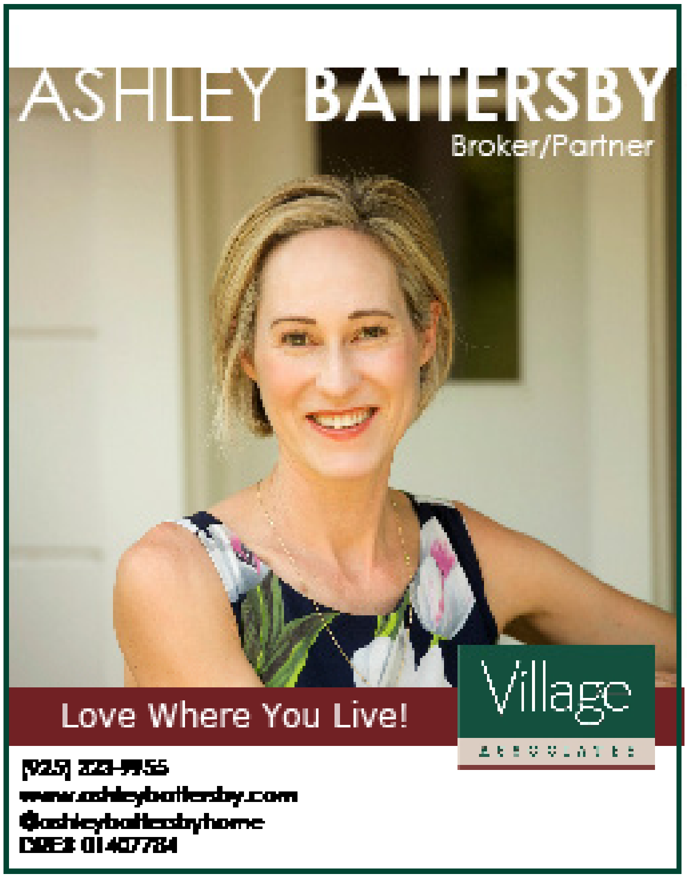
Practice Hours
Monday | 9am - 5pm
Tue - Fri | 7am - 2pm
Sat - Sun | Closed

www.berkeleysmilestudio.com contact@berkelysmilestudio.com

panCoast pizza
A SLICE OF THE EAST COAST

1516 S Main St, Walnut Creek, CA 94596

ORDER ONLINE AT PANCOASTPIZZA.COM
OR CALL (925) 954-1178



(925) 223-9955
www.ashleybattersby.com
@ashleybattersbyhome
DRE# 01407784

Photo of the Issue
Lue Van Handel

1200 PLEASANT HILL ROAD,
LAFAYETTE, CA 94549

CHECK OUT ACALANESBLUEPRINT.COM FOR MORE